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## THE STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS IN ACTION<sup>1</sup>

### INTRODUCTION

“The plot,” says Aristotle, “is, as it were, the soul of tragedy.” Generalizing this principle, the structural analysis says: “Action is the soul of the narrative.” And since all action is motivated by a desire, desire is the fundamental function of all narrative. Hence, the most elementary functional sequence of the narrative can be represented as follows:

- (a) Desire aroused
- (b) Fulfilment sought
- (c) Either success or failure

This can be regarded as the essential articulation or armature of all stories. Function (a) is given in the general setting of the story. In most cases the aroused desire will be challenged by a counter-desire. As a result, function (b) will be thwarted by a corresponding function (b'). Hence, a conflict will arise in which the opposing forces may or may not seek help and assistance. Help itself is an action which must be motivated by a desire: hence, the various enticements offered to the prospective helper. Finally, the conflict will end with the success of one party and the failure of the other. The basic structure will appear as follows:

- |                               |                                |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| (a) Desire aroused            | (a') Desire thwarted           |
| (b) Fulfilment sought         | (b') Obstruction raised        |
| Conflict or Encounter         |                                |
| (c) Either success or failure | (c') Either failure or success |

Given the fundamental postulate that action is the soul of the narrative, this basic structure can be established *a priori*, since it is a purely logical analysis of the mechanism of action.

In the development of the basic structure ‘desire’, especially as an orchestration of the function (b) – (b'), other elementary sequences will be

inserted, some of them linked together by a concatenation. We list here those elementary sequences which appear in our present study:

*'Help'* (d) Help sought

(e) Help given or refused

(f) If given, help successful or not successful

*Note:* Function (e) may appear under the form 'help withheld'.

Then help will be sought by means of either 'fraud' or 'contract'.

*'Fraud'* (g) Fraud conceived

(h) Fraud performed

(i) Fraud successful or not successful

*'Contract'* or *'Bargain'*

(j) Conditions proposed

(k) Conditions accepted or refused

(l) If accepted, conditions fulfilled or not fulfilled

*'Message'*

(m) Message sent

(n) Message received or not received

(o) If received, message acted upon or not acted upon

*'Hunt'* or *'Ambush'*

(p) Quarry spotted

(q) Quarry pursued or ambushed

(r) Hunt or ambush successful or not successful

*'Obstacle'* or *'Enemy'*

(s) Obstacle or enemy spotted

(t) Attack or flight

(u) If attack, attack successful or not successful

*'Trust'* or *'Friendship'*

(v) Trust sought

(w) Trust obtained or refused

(x) If obtained, trust proved true or false

We shall now submit this logical structure to a test of empirical verification. First, we shall study three short episodes in which the basic structure appears in its simplicity, although as we pass from the first to the second, and from the second to the third, a richer orchestration of the bare armature will be perceived. In the second part, we shall

make a comparative study of two longer episodes: our purpose will be to show that the basic structure remains unchanged in spite of the great diversity of themes. In the third part, we shall analyze a modern novel and try to follow the fluctuations of the basic structure throughout the development of the action.

### 1. THE BASIC STRUCTURE

Of the three episodes to be analyzed in this part, the first two are taken from the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the third from the *Mahābhārata*.<sup>2</sup> The setting is found at the level of the narration or discourse where the story is fully situated in time and space. For the first two episodes, the setting is as follows: Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, under the guidance of Viśvāmitra, have reached the court of King Janaka. They are met by Śatānanda, Janaka's priest, who undertakes to relate to the young princes the remarkable career of Viśvāmitra. We thus come to know that Viśvāmitra, amazed at the power of Vasiṣṭha, has decided to gain, by penance, the title of *Brahmarṣi*. On the other hand, Indra and the other gods are full of apprehension : they resent the ambition of the proud *kṣatriya* and they devise means to stop his penance.

*The First Episode*: Menakā breaks Viśvāmitra's penance (*Bālakāṇḍa* 63: 3-13). Just before this episode, Viśvāmitra obtained the title of *Ṛṣi*.

- |                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| (a) <i>Desire aroused</i> : (Viśvāmitra is not satisfied.)                                                    | (a') <i>Desire thwarted</i> : (Not mentioned in the text, but clear from the context.)                                                                                                                  |
| (b) <i>Fulfilment sought</i> : "Then powerful Viśvāmitra resumed his severe penance." (no elaboration at all) | (b') <i>Obstruction raised</i> : "Then, after a long time, the excellent nymph Menakā came to bathe in the Puṣkara lake." (Here again a bare statement; we have to guess that Menakā is sent by Indra.) |

### *Encounter*

"The powerful son of Kuśika saw Menakā in her peerless beauty, [shining] like the lightning in a cloud."

(Possibility of suspense: what will he do? The two indicators "in her peerless beauty" and "like the lightning in a cloud" enhance the charm of the situation. The informant "son of Kuśika" is there for the sake of the metre.)

- |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                           |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| <p>(c) <i>Failure</i>: "Under the sway of Love's infatuation, the sage told her, 'Welcome to you, O Apsaras, do stay here in my hermitage. Please, be kind to one whom Love has bewitched.' Accordingly the maiden of the shapely hips made her home there, to the great detriment of Viśvāmitra's penance. He enjoyed her company for ten years."</p> | <p>(c') <i>Success</i>:<br/>(implied)</p> |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|

(The possibility of suspense has not been exploited. The sage falls without a struggle. What follows, 9-13, describes the awakening of Viśvāmitra and prepares us for the next stage of the struggle. The passage contains very suggestive indicators—underlined in the text—concerning the sage's character.)

"In Viśvāmitra's hermitage years were spent in happy dalliance. After ten years, the great sage Viśvāmitra *was overcome with shame; in the grip of mental torture*, he came to the *bitter realization* that the fiasco of his penance was the doing of the gods: for full ten years he had been fooled by them and they had made him the victim of love's infatuation. The excellent sage *sighed deeply under the sting of remorse*. He saw the nymph Menakā trembling with fear and standing before him with folded hands. *He dismissed her with sweet words.*"

*The Second Episode*: Rambhā is sent to break Viśvāmitra's penance (Bālakāṇḍa 63:22-26 and 64:1-17). This episode is twice as long as the first.

(After dismissing Menakā Viśvāmitra resumes his penance with more determination than ever. Brahmā confers on him the title of *Maharṣi*. The sage, disappointed, begs Brahmā to grant him the title of *Brahmarṣi*. The Creator replies that the time has not come yet : the sage must gain perfect control of his senses.)

- |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>(a) <i>Desire aroused</i>: (Brahmā's encouragement gives new heart to Viśvāmitra.)</p> <p>(b) <i>Fulfilment sought</i>: "The great sage Viśvāmitra resumed his penance: with one arm raised, he stood without support; he lived on air; in summer, he stood in the midst of five fires, in the monsoon the sky was his shelter; in winter he lay day and night in icy water. He spent a thousand years in the practice of this awful penance."</p> | <p>(a') <i>Desire thwarted</i>: (The gods remain vigilant.)</p> <p>(b') <i>Obstruction raised</i>: "While the great sage was thus engaged in penance, deep anguish seized Indra and the gods."<br/>(After b' a new sequence is introduced which was not made explicit in Episode I. The structure of this new sequence is as follows:<br/>(d) Help sought<br/>(e) Help withheld<br/>(f) Help obtained.)</p> |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

(Here the pivot-function which was merely stated in Episode I is enriched with a number of catalysts.)

*The inserted new sequence*

- (d) *Help sought*: "Indra with the Maruts addressed to the nymph Rambhā a speech meant to foster their cause and to ruin that of Viśvāmitra, 'Rambhā, the gods rely on you to accomplish a great task: you will entice Viśvāmitra with the wiles of love.' "
- (e) *Help withheld*: "Thus addressed by the clever Indra the nymph replied timidly with folded hands, 'Lord of the gods, that great sage Viśvāmitra is a terror. He will surely unleash his awful anger against me. I am frightened, do spare me, Lord.' Thus did the nymph speak in her alarm."
- (f) *Help obtained*: "Trembling and with folded hands she heard Indra's reply, 'Do not fear, Rambhā; be nice and do my bidding. With Kandarpa I will stand at your side in the form of an enchanting *kokila* in a radiant vernal tree. As to you, make yourself lovely and dazzling and seduce the sage out of his penance.' Hearing this, she made herself most alluring and, with the artless smile of a coquette (*laltā śucīsmitā*) she went to tempt Viśvāmitra." (The inserted se-

quence with well-chosen catalysts and indicators lends a new charm to the narrative.)

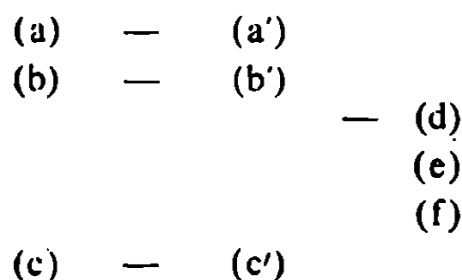
### *Encounter*

"The sage heard the lovely song of the *kokila* : his heart was thrilled when his eyes fell on her." (Here suspense is introduced.) "Under the spell of that incomparable song and of Rambhā's alluring sight, the sage began to doubt. Realizing that the whole scene was contrived by Indra, he let anger get the better of him and cursed Rambhā, 'Rambhā, since you have tried to seduce me while I was engaged in conquering lust and anger, you will be changed into a stone for ten thousand years. A brahmin ascetic of great spiritual power will rescue you from the dire punishment which my anger inflicts on you.'"

<p>(c) <i>Failure</i>: "Having uttered the curse the great sage, unable to control his anger, felt sorry for himself."</p>	<p>(c') <i>Success</i>: (implied)</p>
----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------

(What follows, 15-17, contains two catalysts which complete the story and, as in Episode I, the determination of Viśvāmitra to carry on the struggle.) "Under the effect of the great curse Rambhā was changed into a stone. On hearing the curse, Kandarpa removed himself from the sage's presence. With his penance reduced to nought by his angry outburst, *the sage could not regain his mental peace, his passions being still unconquered. With a heart full of anguish* before the ruin of his penance, he resolved, 'I will never again lose my temper and I shall keep absolute silence.'"

The structure of the second episode can be summed up in the following diagram:



**The Third Episode:** The third episode is another version of Episode I. It is taken from the *Mahābhārata* (*Ādiparvan* 71 : 18-42 and 72 : 1-9). The setting is different. King Duṣyanta has arrived at Kapva's hermit-

age and asks Śakuntalā about her parents. Śakuntalā replies that she heard the story of her birth from her foster-father Kaṇva and retells the story as she heard it. In Śaṭānanda's account of Viśvāmitra's career, the Menakā incident is one among many and, as we have seen, its treatment hardly goes beyond the elementary structure. In Śakuntalā's account, on the other hand, the Menakā incident is central and its treatment will be more elaborate. In fact, it is very similar to that of Episode II (the Rambhā incident).

- |                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>(a) <i>Desire aroused</i>: (The ambition of Viśvāmitra is not mentioned. It is just stated that he practises penance.)</p> <p>(b) <i>Fulfilment sought</i>: “mahat tapah”—“fierce penance”.</p> | <p>(a') <i>Desire thwarted</i>: “Viśvāmitra's penance caused great anxiety to Indra, the Lord of the gods.”</p> <p>(b') <i>Obstruction raised</i>: “As he is powerful, Viśvāmitra through his penance might dethrone me.”</p> <p>(Here, as in Episode II, a new sequence is inserted.)</p> |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

*The inserted new sequence*

- (d) *Help sought*: “Indra, frightened, addressed Menakā, ‘O Menakā, you shine with heavenly talents. Do me a good turn : I will tell you, listen. This Viśvāmitra of divine lustre is engaged in a terrible penance and fills my heart with anguish. Menakā, I put you in charge of him. Sure of himself he has undertaken a fierce and fearful penance. Now, you go and tempt him so that he does not rob me of my position. Go, obstruct his penance and assure my safety. Use anything to entice him, your beauty, your youth, your sweetness, your dalliance, your smile, your words, but make him give up his penance.’ ”
- (e) *Help withheld*: Menakā replied: “Your Lordship is not ignorant of how powerful and irascible the sage is. You yourself tremble at the thought of his might, penance and anger. Then what about me?” (She then—29-34—recites a list of his terrible deeds and concludes:) “All these feats of his give me the creeps. Tell me how I can avoid the fire of his anger. He can consume the worlds with his fire, make the earth tremble with the touch of his foot, send Mount Meru whirling in the air and play havoc with the directions. When such



a man, like a blazing fire, practises penance, how could a feeble woman such as I disturb his mental concentration? All the gods are afraid of him. Shall I, a woman, pretend that I am not?"

- (f) *Help obtained*: (However, Menakā cannot disobey Indra's orders. While in Episode II it was Indra who planned the strategy of seduction, here it is Menakā herself who suggests to Indra how to assure the success of the enterprise.)

"However, ordered by you, how can I refuse to approach the sage? But you, on your part, should think of the plan which will assure my safety while I work for you. Let the Wind-god snatch away my dress while I dally before the sage; let the Love-god assist me in my task and let a fragrant breeze blow from the forest as I approach to seduce him." This said, Menakā went to Viśvāmitra's hermitage as she was ordered. Indra gave orders to the Wind-god to accompany Menakā.

### *Encounter*

"Entering timidly the hermitage, Menakā saw Viśvāmitra lost in penance, all his sins burnt in the fire of austerity. She greeted him and began to play before him. At that moment, the Wind-god snatched away her garment, and as she hurriedly bent to the ground to pick it up, the sage, blazing like fire, cast his eyes on her. She was smiling bashfully, embarrassed, yet peerless, anxious to recover her dress. He saw the unclothed loveliness of her youth." (Note the accumulation of catalysts keeping in abeyance the passage to the next pivot function.)

- |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>(c) <i>Failure</i>: "Seeing the excellence of her beauty and feeling her close to him, he was overwhelmed by love. He invited her and she readily agreed. For a long time they sported together without restraint, until one day the nymph gave a daughter to the sage."</p> | <p>(c') <i>Success</i> (implied): The plan of Indra has worked. "Her task accomplished (<i>kṛtakāryā</i>) Menakā returned quickly to Indra's heaven." (No mention of her being dismissed by Viśvāmitra with kind words.)</p> |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

(The rest of the story tells how the baby girl was protected by birds and rescued by Kuṇva who adopted her.)

*Conclusion.* The basic structure of the three episodes is identical. In Episodes II and III, it is enriched by the insertion of a new elementary sequence. A comparison between Episodes II and III shows that catalysts and indicators can vary in nature and in number without affecting the basic structure. A comparison between Episodes I and III shows that the degree of elaboration depends greatly on the setting of the story as revealed at the level of narration. This should act as a warning against the too facile principle followed by many critics that a shorter version of a story is necessarily older than a longer one.

## II ORCHESTRATION OF THE BASIC STRUCTURE

The three episodes of the First Part had the same theme: the seduction of a hermit with a view to breaking his penance. It might be argued that a similarity of theme will naturally imply a similarity of basic structure. In this Second Part we shall analyze two episodes (Episodes IV and V) developing different themes. Episode IV is taken from the *Iliad* (Book XIV) and keeps a certain analogy with those of Part I. Episode V is taken from the *Mahābhārata* (*Ādiparvan* 76), and tells us quite a different story.

*The Fourth Episode:* Here puts Zeus to sleep (*Iliad*, XIV, 153-360)<sup>3</sup>

The setting is as follows: The Achaeans are in a bad way. Agamemnon, Odysseus and Diomedes have been wounded. Agamemnon proposes to "run away from disaster", Odysseus and Diomedes dissuade him from such a desperate course. Poseidon decides to go down to the battlefield and help the Achaeans in spite of the strict orders of Zeus.

- |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                            |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>(a) <i>Desire aroused:</i> "Now Here of the Golden Throne, looking out from where she stood on the summit of Olympus, was quick to observe two things. She saw how Poseidon was bustling about on the field of battle, and she rejoiced. But she also saw Zeus sitting on the topmost peak of Ida. And this sight filled her with disgust."</p> | <p>(a') <i>Desire thwarted:</i> the vigilance of Zeus.</p> |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|

(b) *Fulfilment sought*: "She began to wonder how she could bemuse the wits of Zeus; and she decided that the best way to go about the business was this. She would deck herself out to full advantage and visit him on the mountain. If he succumbed to her beauty and wished to fold her in his arms, she would benumb his busy brain and close his eyes in a soothing and forgetful sleep."

(b') *Obstruction raised*: (As long as Zeus remains awake, Here cannot give a free hand to Poseidon.)

(In Episode II, we saw Indra advising Rambhā to make herself "lovely and dazzling". Rambhā's toilet was described in half a line: "*kṛtvā rāpam anuttamam*"—"making herself most alluring". This traditional theme of the belle preparing herself to meet her lover offers a fruitful scope for development which will consist of a number of catalysts interspersed with indicators and informants. Here is the *Iliad*'s description of Here's toilet. Catalysts are underlined; the portions not underlined are either indicators or informants.) "*Accordingly, she made her way to the bedroom that had been built for her by her own son Hephaestus, who had fitted the stout doors, when he hung them on their posts, with a secret lock which no other god could open. Here went in and closed the polished doors behind her. She began by removing every stain from her comely body with ambrosia, and anointing herself with the delicious and imperishable olive-oil she uses. It was perfumed and had only to be stirred in the Palace of the Bronze Floor for its scent to spread through heaven and earth. With this she rubbed her lovely skin; then she combed her hair, and with her own hands plaited her shining locks and let them fall in their divine beauty from her immortal head. Next she put on a fragrant robe of delicate material that Athene with her skilful hands had made for her and lavishly embroidered. She fastened it over her breast with golden clasps and, at her waist, with a girdle from which a hundred tassels hung. In the pierced lobes of her ears she fixed two ear-rings, each a thing of lambent beauty with its cluster of three drops. She covered her head with a beautiful new headdress, which was as bright as the sun; and last of all she bound a fine pair of sandals on her shimmering feet.*"<sup>4</sup>

(After this Here wants to secure the love-girdle which is the exclusive possession of Aphrodite. But she cannot reveal to Aphrodite the real purpose of her request, for Aphrodite is on the side of the Trojans. She must therefore resort to fraud. And this introduces a new elementary sequence, that of help obtained by fraud. Its basic structure is as follows:

- (g) Fraud conceived
- (h) Fraud performed
- (i) Fraud either succeeds or fails.)

*The first inserted sequence .*

- (g) *Fraud conceived*: "Her toilet perfected, she left her room, beckoned Aphrodite away from the other gods and had a word with her in private."
- (h) *Fraud performed*: " 'I wonder, dear child,' she said, 'whether you will do me a favour, or will refuse because you are annoyed with me for helping the Danaans while you are on the Trojans' side.' To this Aphrodite replied, 'Here, Queen of Heaven and Daughter of mighty Cronos, tell me what is in your mind, and I shall gladly do what you ask of me, if I can and if it is possible.' Queen Here's answer was calculated to deceive . . ." (The story she invents is that Ocean and Tethys have been estranged for a long time and she wants to "induce them once more to sleep in each other's loving arms.")
- (i) *Fraud succeeds*: (Like Menakā in Episode III, Aphrodite finds it difficult not to comply with Here's request. But unlike Menakā, she does not expose herself to any danger by granting Here what she wants.) " 'To refuse a request from you that sleep in the arms of the King of Heaven, would be both wrong and impossible,' replied Aphrodite, and took from her bosom the curiously embroidered girdle in which all her magic resides, Love, Desire and the sweet bewitching words that turn a wise man into a fool. 'There,' she said, 'take this girdle and keep it in your bosom.' Lady Here smiled, and as she tucked the girdle into her bosom she smiled again." (Here is not satisfied yet: she will seek the help of the god of Sleep. Another elementary sequence is inserted.)

*The second inserted sequence*

- (d) *Help sought*: (Here hurries to Lemnos and addresses the god of Sleep) " 'Sleep, Master of all the gods and all mankind, if ever, you

listened to me in the past, do what I ask of you now, and I shall be grateful for ever. Seal the bright eyes of Zeus for me in sleep, directly I have lain in his loving arms.' ” (She promises him a beautiful chair of imperishable gold.)

- (e) *Help withheld*: Like Menakā in Episode III, Sleep has reasons to fear the consequences of his interference. But his reasons are more personal than Menakā's, for on a previous occasion he helped Here and was the target of Zeus' wrath. “ ‘And now you come to me once more with another impossible request.’ ”

(Before the refusal of Sleep, Here decides to entice him. A new sequence is inserted after (e).)

*The inserted sequence: 'Bargain'*

- (j) *Conditions proposed*: “Come, do as I wish, and I will give you one of the young Graces in marriage. She shall be called the wife of Sleep.”
- (k) *Conditions accepted*: Sleep is attracted by the offer. He make Here swear that she will give him Pasithecē, “with whom I have been in love all my life”.
- (l) *Conditions fulfilled*: Here swears.  
Thus the sequence ‘Help’ can be completed:
- (f) *Help obtained*: Sleep accompanies Here to Mount Ida.

*Encounter*

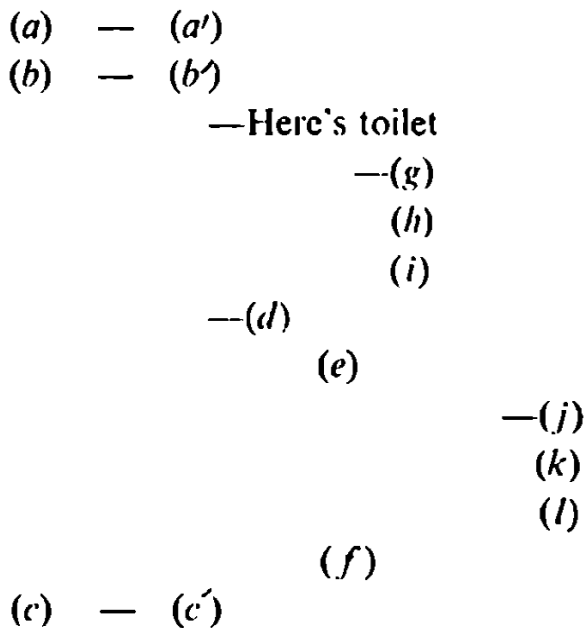
Here and Sleep depart and reach Mount Ida. As they approach the place where Zeus is supervising the battle, “Sleep climbed up into a tall pine-tree. There he perched, hidden by the branches, in the form of a song-bird of the mountains.” One is reminded of Indra, disguised as a *kokila* and perched on a vernal tree, in Episode II. Here proceeds alone. “Zeus saw her, and at the first look his heart was captured by desire, as in the days when they had first enjoyed each other's love. . . . He rose to meet her and said, ‘Here, what business brings you here?’ Here is now going to sharpen Zeus' desire by pretending that she has not come for him. She repeats the story of Ocean and Tethys and her desire to go and bring about their reconciliation. Zeus replies, ‘That is a journey you may well postpone. Today let us enjoy the delights of love. Never has such desire, for goddess or woman flooded and overwhelmed my heart.’ He then rather tactlessly tells her about all the love-affairs he has had in the past and concludes: ‘Never have I felt such love, such sweet desire as fills me now for you.’

Here goes on tantalizing him: she pretends that she feels shy to lie with him in public "on the heights of Ida where there is no privacy whatever. . . Think of the scandal there would be." Zeus immediately creates a golden cloud which the sun even cannot pierce.

(c) *Success*: "The Son of Cronos took his wife in his arms." (Sleep does his work and, once Zeus is conquered by sleep and love, he flies to the Achaean ships and tells Poseidon that he can safely help the Achaeans. for "I sent him into a deep and gentle sleep after Here had tricked him into lying in her arms."

(c) *Failure*: (Zeus lulled into sleep can no longer supervise the battle.)

The structure of Episode IV can be summed up in the following diagram:



Structurally speaking, the difference between Episode III and Episode IV lies in the elaborate development of the theme 'toilet' and in the addition of the elementary sequences 'Fraud' and 'Bargain'.

*The Fifth Episode*: Kaca is sent to gain the knowledge of resurrecting the dead (*Mahābhārata*, *Ādiparvan*, 76).

The setting is as follows: Vaiśampayana has been telling King Janamejaya about his ancestors. He has mentioned Yayāti and his two

wives, Devayāni and Śarmiṣṭhā. He also related how Puru, Yayāti's youngest son, exchanged his youth for his father's old age and how Yayāti rewarded him by making him king and head of the dynasty. Now, Janamejaya's curiosity has been aroused and he asks Vaiśampāyana to tell him in detail (*viśtāreṇa*) how Yayāti, a *kṣatriya*, succeeded in obtaining Devayānī, the daughter of a brahmin, as his wife. Vaiśampāyana begins by narrating the terrible struggle between the gods and the demons. The gods appointed Āngiras (alias Bṛhaspati) as their priest. The demons chose Uśanas (alias Śukra) as theirs. "Both of them were brahmins, but the rivalry between the two of them was fierce." However, Uśanas (Śukra) had a tremendous advantage over Bṛhaspati: he possessed the secret science of bringing back the dead to life. The demons, therefore, under the leadership of their king Vṛṣaparvan, could defy the gods with impunity.

(a) *Desire aroused*: "As Bṛhaspati did not know the life-giving science, the gods were deeply despondent."

(a') *Desire thwarted*: (The demons decide not to allow the gods to acquire the secret science.)

(b) *Fulfilment sought*: (The gods devise a plan which will require the help of Kaca, the son of Bṛhaspati.)

(b') *Obstruction raised*: (The demons are vigilant.)

(Here a new sequence is inserted).

#### *The inserted sequence*

(d) *Help sought*: "The despondent gods approached Kaca, the eldest son of Bṛhaspati and told him, 'Show your devotion by rendering us a great service. Bring for us the secret science which resides in the mighty brahmin Śukra and we shall make you a full partner in our divine prerogatives. You will find him at the court of Vṛṣaparvan, catering to the demons and ignoring the gods. You are a young man and you can propitiate him. Another thing: Śukra has a daughter, Devayāni. Try to gain her favour. Ingratiate yourself with her through your behaviour, your courtesy and the sweetness of your manners. For if she becomes fond of you, you will certainly obtain the secret science of her father.' "

(e) *Help given*: Kaca raises no objection and leaves for Vṛṣaparvan's

capital. (From now on the cause of the gods is in the hands of Kaca.)

The development of (b) — (b') takes the form of a succession of intertwined sequences:

(b) *Fulfilment sought:*

(b') *Fulfilment obstructed:*

(v) *Trust sought:* Kaca asks Śukra to make him his disciple. He also sings and dances before Devayāni and sends her presents.

(w) *Trust obtained:* Śukra welcomes him out of respect for his father. Devayāni is conquered and responds with dalliance and love-making.

(s) *Enemy spotted:* The demons understand Kaca's game.

(t) *Enemy ambushed:* As he goes to the forest with the cows, they follow him, and attack him.

(u) *Attack successful:* They kill him, cut him to pieces and feed his body to wolves.

(x) *Trust proved true:* Devayāni begs her father to bring him back to life, for "without him I cannot live." "Summoned by Śukra, Kaca reappears alive and full of cheer."

(t) *Enemy ambushed:* Kaca goes to the forest to pluck flowers. The demons follow and attack him.



(x) *Trust proved true:* Devayāni begs her father to revive him and Śukra readily complies with her prayer.

(x) *Trust proved true:* Devayāni begs Śukra to revive him. She extols Kaca's virtues and declares that she will kill herself if Kaca does not come back alive.

Śukra requests Kaca to tell him where he is. To his amazement he hears a tiny voice issuing from his belly and telling him of the demons' cunning stratagem. He is in a terrible dilemma: *Vadhena me jīvitam syāt Kacasya*: Kaca's life is my death. He proposes a bargain to Kaca:

- (j) *Conditions proposed:* Śukra will teach Kaca the secret science on the condition that once revived he will bring him back to life.
- (k) *Conditions accepted:* Kaca agrees.
- (l) *Conditions fulfilled:* Kaca is revived and uses the secret science to give back life to his master.

(u) *Attack successful:* They kill him, tear him to pieces and throw him into the sea.

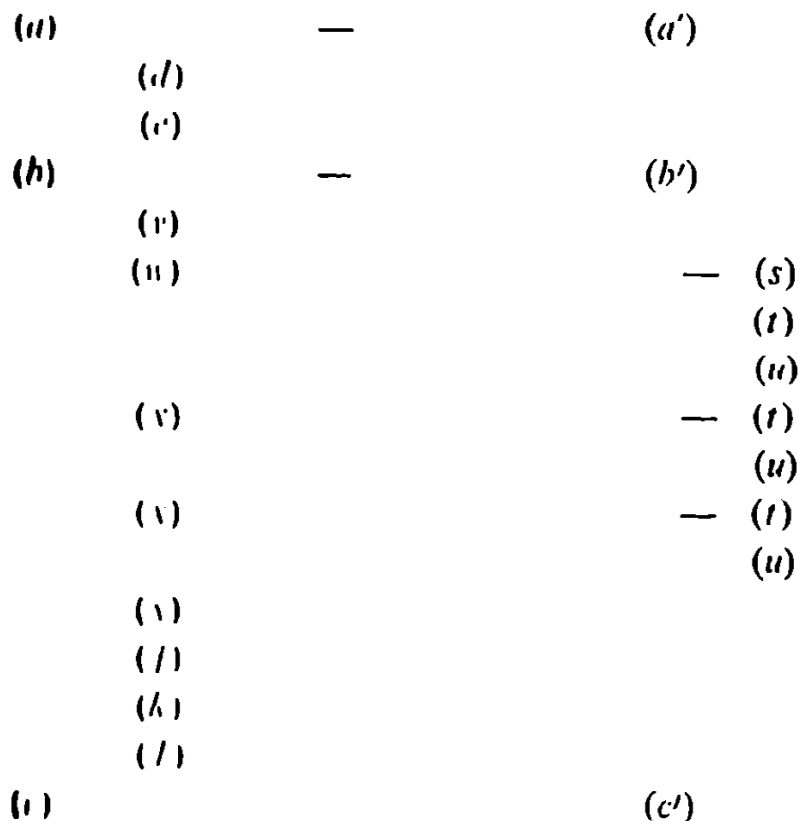
(t) *Enemy ambushed:* A third time the demons follow and attack Kaca.

(u) *Attack successful:* They kill him, burn his body, crush his ashes to powder which they mix in the drink of Śukra.

(c) ~~Success~~: Kaca has acquired the secret science. After completing his service of Śukra, he goes back with his permission to the gods' abode.

(c') *Failure*: The demons are frustrated in their effort to keep the monopoly of the secret science.

The following diagram shows the structure of Episode V:



### III The Structure of a Novel

Frederick Forsyth's *The Day of the Jackal* (Corgi Books, London, 1974) is a well known novel which *The Sunday Times* reviewed in glowing terms: "As a political thriller it is virtually in a class by itself: subtle, fast-moving, superbly written, unputdownable, easily beating Ian Fleming on his own ground."<sup>11</sup>

The first two chapters give us the setting with a profusion of indicators and informants which situate the story in time and place and build up an atmosphere of tension and suspense. Let us gather the main facts.

We are in France in 1963, after de Gaulle has solved the Algerian crisis by recognizing Algeria's independence. De Gaulle's policy has embittered the French settlers in Algeria and antagonized a part of the French army. A group of officers have organized the OAS (Organisation

de l'Armée Secrète) with the definite purpose of killing de Gaulle. Several attempts have failed, the French Secret Service has been able to identify a number of leaders and to infiltrate the movement. They have captured Antoine Argoud, the operations chief of the OAS in exile. "Short of funds, losing national and international support, membership and credibility, the OAS was crumbling before the onslaught of the French Secret Service and police." After the capture of Argoud, the leadership of the OAS in exile passed into the hands of Marc Rodin.

The indicators and informants give us a good picture of the two leaders: Antoine Argoud, "a product of one of France's top universities, the École Polytechnique, had a good brain and a dynamic energy. As a lieutenant under de Gaulle in the Free French he had fought for the liberation of France from the Nazis. Later he commanded a regiment of cavalry in Algiers. A short, wiry man, he was a brilliant but ruthless soldier." Working in close collaboration with the CRN (the National Resistance Council), he had "set up for Bidault a chain of interviews with major networks and newspaper correspondents, during which the old politician was able to put a sober cloak over the less palatable activities of the OAS thugs."

Marc Rodin, the son of a cobbler, escaped from France during the German occupation and joined the Free French in England. He fought in North Africa and Normandy and rose from the ranks to the grade of colonel. He fought in Indo-China and saw in the French defeat a shameful betrayal of the French army by the politicians. In 1956, he left for Algeria, confident that de Gaulle would never sever Algeria from France. "When the proof came finally and beyond any doubt that Charles de Gaulle's concept of a resuscitated France did not include a French Algeria, Rodin's world disintegrated like a china vase hit by a train. Of faith and hope, belief and confidence, there was nothing left. Just hate. Hate for the system, for the politicians, for the intellectuals, for the Algerians, for the trade-unions, for the journalists, for the foreigners; but most of all hate for That Man." His appearance: "Tall and spare, with a cadaverous face hollowed by the hatred within, he usually masked his emotions with an un-Latin frigidity." His power to grasp a problem: "When faced with his own concept of France and the honour of the Army Rodin was as bigoted as the rest, but when faced with a purely practical problem he could bring to bear a pragmatic and logical concentration that was more effective than all the volatile enthusiasm and senseless violence in the world."

Concerning the hero of the story, two paragraphs bursting with suggestive details very successfully introduce his mysterious personality: "As he (Rodin) boarded his train (in Vienna), a Comet 4B of BOAC drifted down the flight path towards Runway Zero-Four at London Airport. It was inbound from Beirut. Among the passengers as they filed through the arrivals lounge was a tall, blond Englishman. His face was healthily tanned by the Middle East sun. He felt relaxed and lit after two months enjoying the undeniable pleasures of the Lebanon and the, for him, even greater pleasure of supervising the transfer of a handsome sum of money from a bank in Beirut to another in Switzerland.

"Far behind him on the sandy soil of Egypt, long since buried by the baffled and furious Egyptian police, each with a neat bullet hole through the spine, were the bodies of two German missile engineers. Their departure from life had set back the development of Nasser's Al Zafira rocket by several years and a Zionist millionaire in New York felt his money had been well spent. After passing easily through Customs the Englishman took a hire car to his flat in Mayfair."

As a dramatic curtain-raiser, the first chapter gives the full account of the abortive attempt on de Gaulle's life which led to the execution, on the 11th March 1963, of Colonel Jean-Marie Bastien-Thiry, in the main court yard of the Fort d'Ivry, at six-forty in the morning. The first chapter opens with the description of the execution, then goes on with the account of the conspiracy. We have here the elementary sequence "ambush" or "hunt."

- (p) *Quarry spotted:* 22nd August 1962, sultry evening, people leaving the city to spend the week-end in the country. In the Elysée palace, Cabinet meeting. 7-30 pm: the ministers leave the palace. 7-45 pm: de Gaulle, his wife and their son-in-law enter their waiting car. Another car follows with a bodyguard and Jean Ducret, chief of the Presidential Security Corps. Two policemen on motorbikes precede the presidential car.
- (q) *Quarry followed:* (The convoy reaches the Avenue de Marigny.) "From under the chestnut trees a young man in a white crash helmet astride a scooter watched the cortège pass, then slid away from the kerb and followed." (Reaching the Boulevard des Invalides, he makes sure of the route taken by the convoy and enters a café.)

*The Inserted sequence: 'message'*

- (m) *Message sent*: "Inside, taking a small metal token from his pocket, he strode to the back of the café where the telephone was situated and placed a local call."
- (n) *Message received*: "Lieutenant-Colonel Jean-Marie Bastien-Thiry waited in a café in the suburb of Meudon. . . . He was sipping a beer when the call came through." He takes the phone, listens and mutters, 'Very good, thank you.'
- (o) *Message acted upon*: message relayed. The same elementary sequence is linked up (concatenation).
- (m) *Message sent*: "He strolled out of the bar on the pavement, took a rolled paper from under his arm, and carefully unfolded it twice."
- (n) *Message received*: "Across the street a young woman let drop the lace curtain of her first-floor flat, and turned to the twelve men who lounged about the room. She said, 'It's route number two.'"
- (o) *Message acted upon*: [This leads us back to (q) ].

7.55 pm: the twelve men leave in six vehicles. By 8-05 pm, they take their position on the Avenue de la Libération, not far from the main cross-roads of Petit-Clamart. Bastien-Thiry is the lookout man: he will give the signal by waving his newspaper. Dusk falls and the visibility is poor.

- (r) *Quarry escapes*: (The signal is given a few seconds late and the men in ambush hesitate on account of the falling darkness. The presidential convoy passes at full speed while the bullets miss their target. The conspirators flee. One minor character among them is arrested and "sings" for eight hours. All the participants are named. The leader, Bastien-Thiry, is executed on 11th March 1963.)  
 "The death of the officer, leader of a gang of OAS killers who had sought to shoot the President of France, was to have been an end—an end to further attempts to the President's life. But by a quirk of fate it marked a beginning." The quirk of fate which ushered in a new beginning was the change of command in the secret organiza-

tion. After the abortive attempt of Petit-Clamart the French Secret Service had captured Antoine Argoud: "In removing Argoud, despite the enormous demoralization this caused in the OAS, they (the French Secret Service) had paved the way for his shadowy deputy, the little known but equally astute Lieutenant-Colonel Marc Rodin, to assume command of operations aimed at assassinating de Gaulle. In many ways it was a bad bargain."

The second chapter offers a situation parallel to that of Episode V, in which the gods were trying to find a way to obtain from Śukra the secret of his life-giving science. Here Rodin, facing an almost desperate situation, seeks a plan which will defeat the vigilance of the Secret Service. The link up with what precedes is operated by the elementary sequence "message":

- (m) *Message sent*: "The execution (of Bastien-Thiry) was reported on the 8 am news (of 11th March 1963) of Radio Europe Number One in French. It was heard in most parts of Western Europe by those who cared to tune in."
- (n) *Message received*: "In a small hotel room in Austria the broadcast was to set off a train of thoughts and actions that brought General de Gaulle nearer to death than at any time in his career. The room was that of Colonel Marc Rodin, new operations chief of the OAS."
- (o) *Message acted upon*: "Marc Rodin flicked off the switch of his transistor radio, and rose from the table, leaving the breakfast tray almost untouched. . . . 'Bastards'. He murmured the word quietly and with great venom."

[We list here the main catalysts following upon Rodin's bitter reaction:

- (1) *Reflection*: No attempt organized by the OAS is likely to succeed. Hence, an outsider must be found and hired.
- (2) *Investigation*: "By mid-afternoon (of 11th March 1963) he was gone, bags packed, bill paid, departed on a lonely mission to find a man, or more precisely a type of man, whom he did not know existed."
- (3) *Information gathered*: After ninety days, i.e. a little before the middle of June, he returns to Vienna, with three dossiers about three professional killers, a German, a South-African and an Englishman.

- (4) He summons from Italy two high-ranking members of the OAS, René Montclair, an army officer, treasurer of the OAS, and André Casson, a civilian, co-ordinator of the underground activities in France.
- (5) He exposes to them the situation and convinces them that the only solution is to hire a professional killer who does not belong to the OAS.
- (6) He makes them read the three dossiers and they all agree that the Englishman is the best of the three.

Then follows the elementary sequence "message":]

- (m) *Message sent*: (15th June: Rodin phones to a contact in London.)
  - (n) *Message received*: Pierre, the contact, is told to go to a specified address in London and to ask the gentleman to fly to Vienna in the afternoon.
  - (o) *Message acted upon*: Pierre and the Englishman board the BEA Vanguard and reach Vienna in the evening. At the Airport a message is waiting for Pierre at the counter: "Ring 61. 44. 03, ask for Schulz." He takes the Englishman by taxi to pension Kleist and tells him to report in room 64. Pierre goes back. The Englishman goes to room 64 and is interviewed by the three OAS men. The interview takes the form of the elementary sequence "contract" or "bargain."
  - (j) *Conditions proposed*: (Rodin exposes the object of the interview. The Englishman makes him feel that he is needed.) " 'Will you assassinate de Gaulle?', asked Rodin at last. 'Yes, but it will cost a lot of money.' 'How much?', asked Montclair. 'Half a million.' Rodin glanced at Montclair who grimaced. 'That's a lot of money, half a million new francs. . . .' 'Dollars', said the Englishman, 'I shall leave you the name of my bank in Switzerland. When they tell me the first two hundred and fifty thousand dollars have been deposited, or when I am fully ready, whichever is later, I shall move.' " His London address and phone number should not be used except in case of extreme necessity. Casson promises him to put him in touch with one OAS contact in Paris.
- No one except the three leaders should know about the plot. The three leaders themselves should protect themselves against any possibility of capture. "I shall feel myself free to call off if any one of you three are captured."

"The planning will be mine, as with the operation. I shall divulge the details to no one, not even to you. In short, I shall disappear. You will hear nothing from me again. . . . I prefer to bank on my complete anonymity. It is the best weapon I have."

The code-name of the Englishman will be 'the Jackal'.

- (k) *Conditions accepted:* A few objections are raised, but Rodin overrules them. "Rodin escorted the Englishman to the door and opened it." Viktor Kowalski, Rodin's bodyguard, was standing at the door and heard Rodin wish the visitor, 'Bonsoir, Mr. Jackal.' "
- (l) *Conditions fulfilled:* The fulfilling of the conditions will trigger off a chain of reactions:
- (1) *Financial commitment:* "During the second half of June and the whole of July 1963 France was rocked by an outbreak of violent crime against banks, jewellers' shops and post offices." Reaction: Among the people arrested some "soon admitted they were OAS men." After long interrogations, "the police came to believe that the prisoners did not know what the purpose of the robberies was."
  - (2) *The security of the three leaders:* By the end of June, the French Secret Service received from Rome the information that Rodin, Montclair and Casson had taken up residence on the top floor of a hotel just off the Via Condotti. The floor below them was occupied by their bodyguards. Reaction: The Secret Service will not be able to organize a snatch-job on the Italian soil. They are unable to guess the reasons why the OAS leaders have thus protected themselves against capture.
  - (3) *The Jackal sole master of the operations:* As in Episode V where the cause of the gods is totally in the hands of Kaca, so here too the cause of the OAS is in the hands of the Jackal. This marks the real beginning of the story which will develop according to the basic structure, 'desire'.

As in Episode V, where the body of the story consisted in the various phases of the function (b)-(b'), so also here, the whole body of the novel consists in the parallel development of the Jackal's quest for success and of the Secret Service's efforts to frustrate his plans. This parallel development is clearly divided into two parts: the first, when the opposing



forces are in complete ignorance of each other; the second, when both gradually discover each other's moves and counter-moves.

Before analyzing the structure of the novel, let us note one particular device used to create suspense: it consists in keeping the reader in ignorance of certain important elements of the plot. This device brings out what we have called "the seminal potentiality" of the pivot-functions. In analyzing the basic structure of the novel, we shall follow as closely as possible the time-schedule with a view to pointing out, within the diachronic unfolding of incidents, the synchronic structure which sustains it.

*From the 15th June to the 18th July*

- |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>(a) <i>Desire aroused</i>: Half a million dollars.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | <p>(a') <i>Desire thwarted</i>: The bank robberies and the information about Rodin and his companions arouse the vigilance of the Secret Service.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <p>(b) <i>Fulfilment sought</i>:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Documentation</i>: "From the day of his return in London the Jackal set himself among other things to acquire and read almost every word written about or by Charles de Gaulle."</li> <li>2. <i>Planning</i>: After days of reading and reflection, he decides the 'when', the 'where' and the 'how' of the operation. (The reader is kept in the dark.)</li> <li>3. <i>False identity papers</i>: "He had decided to operate throughout under a false identity." First, he obtains a false British passport by <i>fraud</i>.</li> </ol> | <p>(b') <i>Obstruction raised</i>:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. "What the Jackal did not know was that the security men he was up against were at least among the best in the world, that the whole security apparatus around de Gaulle was in a state of permanent forewarning of the likelihood of some attempt being made on their charge's life."</li> </ol> |

*The sequence inserted under (b) 3*

- (g) *Fraud conceived*: Visiting a village cemetery "the Jackal found a

gravestone to suit his purpose, that of Alexander Duggan who died at the age of two and a half years in 1931. Had he lived, the Duggan child would have been a few months older than the Jackal in July 1963."

- (h) *Fraud performed*: Pretending to be an amateur genealogist "engaged in attempting to trace the family tree of the Duggan", he praises the beauty of the church and offers a contribution for its restoration. The vicar, quite pleased, shows him the parish records. From the Central Registry of Births, Marriages and Deaths he obtains a copy of both the birth and death certificates of young Duggan.
- (i) *Fraud succeeds*: He fills an application for passport in Duggan's name "giving exactly the right age, date of birth etc. but his own personal description", forges the vicar's signature as referee and destroys the death certificate. "The brand new passport arrived by post four days later."

Second, he acquires two false foreign passports by theft from aliens landing at the London Airport: one from a Dane pastor, Per Jensen, the other from an American student, Marty Schulberg. He buys clothes fitting the identity of the two foreigners and a "preparation for tinting the hair a medium grey, and another for tinting it chestnut brown".

#### *18th July*

4. In the afternoon the Jackal flies to Copenhagen. The next day (19th) he buys a clerical suit, a pair of sober black shoes, a pair of socks, a set of underwear and three white shirts, all with a Danish maker's name. He also buys a

2. The Jackal reads in *Le Figaro* that Commissaire Hypolite Dupuis, Deputy Chief of the Brigade Criminelle died suddenly and has been replaced by Commissaire Claude Lebel.

book in Danish on the notable churches and cathedrals in France. In the afternoon he flies to Brussels.

*20th-21st July*

5. *The weapon:* On the 20th he contacts Louis whom he knew as a fellow-mercenary in Katanga. Louis fixes for him an appointment with Goossens for the next day. Goossens is an expert armourer dealing in an illicit trade of arms. On the 21st he meets Goossens in the morning, and strikes a bargain with him.

*The sequence inserted under (b) 5*

- (j) *Conditions proposed:* The Jackal wants a rifle the various parts of which should be detachable and fitted into tubular compartments with a diameter less than two and a half inches. He explains to Goossens the nature of the tubular structure, but not to the reader. Goossens asks for a fortnight and one thousand English pounds. He asks the Jackal to report on the 1st August for final discussion. The Jackal demands absolute discretion on the pain of death.
- (k) *Conditions accepted:* Both men agree and the Jackal makes an advance payment of five hundred pounds "in order to establish his *bona fides*."
- (l) *Conditions fulfilled:* For this last pivot-function, see (b) 12.

6. *More identity papers:*

Through Louis the Jackal contacts, in the afternoon of the same day, a professional forger, with whom he strikes a bargain.

*The sequence inserted under (b) 6*

- (j) *Conditions proposed:* The Jackal wants his driving licence to be changed to the name of Duggan. He wants a French identity card and another document the nature of which is not revealed to the reader, bearing the Jackal's photograph as an elderly man. The original driving-licence will be returned.  
The forger asks for twenty thousand Belgian francs.  
The Jackal demands absolute discretion on the pain of death.
- (k) *Conditions accepted:* Both men agree. They go to the forger's studio. The Jackal's face is changed through make-up and photographs are taken. The next meeting is fixed for the beginning of August.
- (l) *Conditions fulfilled:* For this last pivot-function, see (b) 14.

*22nd July*

7. In the morning the Jackal leaves for Paris by train.

3. Colonel Rolland, head of the Action Service, receives two reports. One confirms the residence in Rome of the three OAS chiefs and adds that a certain Viktor Kowalski mails their letters and collects their mail from the head post office of Rome. The second is the report of the arrest at Metz of a certain Sandor Kovacs, a Hungarian who, at the time of the Algerian trouble, operated as a partner of the former Foreign Legion corporal Viktor Kowalski. "Rolland pondered the connection between the two men. . . . At last he pressed a buzzer in front of him and said, 'Get me the personal file on Viktor Kowalski. At once.' "

4. After reading Kowalski's personal file Rolland conceives a

fraud: with the help of a specialist in handwriting he will write a letter to Kowalski in the name of Kovacs.

*The personal file of Kowalski under (b') 4*

During the war, at the age of seventeen, Kowalski escapes from Poland. In 1946 he goes to Italy and France, joins the Foreign Legion, is sent to Vietnam where he serves six years under Rodin. He comes back to Marseilles, meets Julie, "a tiny but vicious scrubber in a dockside bar". When she is pregnant he has to leave for Algeria. He asks his friend Josef Grzybowski (JoJo) to take care of the child after its birth. JoJo and his wife adopt the baby-girl and call her Sylvie. Twice Kowalski passes through Marseilles and sees his daughter who knows him as uncle Viktor. He keeps in touch with JoJo whose business prospers. He tells nobody else that he has a daughter.

5. Rolland sends two of his men to Marseilles. They check on JoJo: he is there with his wife and Sylvie, a healthy girl eight years old.

6. The fraud takes the form of a message.

*The sequence inserted under (b') 6*

(m) *Message sent*: The letter is composed in the name of Kovacs: Kovacs writes that he has read in a paper that Rodin is in Rome. He supposes that Kowalski is there with him. He gives some news about himself and finally informs him that, through a friend of JoJo, he has heard that the little Sylvie is sick with "Luke-something." The letter is despatched.

(n) *Message received*: See (b') below.

*23rd 31st July*

**8. Reconnoitering: The Juckul**

spends several days in Paris as a tourist. On the 28th July we find him near the Place de Rennes, "a square which had been renamed Place du 18 juin 1940 when the Gaullists took power in the City Hall." After a long scrutiny of the site he chooses the building from which he will do the shooting. During a short absence of the landlady he climbs to the sixth floor and notes the disposition of the rooms. He makes sure that the fire-escape will offer a safe exit.

9. In Paris Jacqueline Dumas, "twenty-six years old and of considerable beauty, works as a beautician in an expensive salon." Both her brother and her lover have been killed in Algeria. "Her motives were simple: they should be avenged, no matter by what means, no matter what the cost to herself or anyone else." She works for the OAS. At the end of July she is told by her contact to befriend a certain gentleman whose identity is not revealed. She has met him a few times. On the 29th July his wife and two children have left for their country house and she is invited by him to spend the night at his place.

10. *Accessories:* On the 31st July the Jackal goes to the Flea Market, buys a greasy black beret, a pair of used shoes, a pair of trousers

and a long military coat stretching well below the knee. He also buys some old medals. He leaves for Brussels in the late afternoon.

*Continuation of the sequence under (b') 6*  
*1st August*

(n) *Message received:* Kowalski receives the letter in the Rome hotel. He is worried. He asks Rodin what kind of disease is "Luke-something." He is told that it must be leukaemia, cancer of the blood, incurable.

11. In the afternoon Rodin receives a letter from his banker in Switzerland informing him that his account contains now over two hundred and fifty thousand dollars.

12. As he prepares to write to his banker to make a transfer to the Jackal's bank, Casson asks him to wait for a few days, until he gets further information from his agent in France: he has just received news that the OAS has succeeded in placing an agent close to one of de Gaulle's top men [see (b) 9]. Rodin agrees.

*Continuation of the sequence under (b) 5*

(1) *Conditions half fulfilled:* The Jackal calls on Goossens. The weapon is ready, but the tubular casing is not. Goossens will need a few more days. (The Jackal decides to use those days for shooting practice. Goossens advises him to go to the Ardennes after the week-end.) He takes the rifle with him.

13. In the afternoon he phones to his Swiss banker who tells him that no money has yet been transferred to his account.

14. He then goes to the forger.

*Continuation of the sequence under (b) 6*

(1) *Conditions not fulfilled:* The three documents are ready: the driving licence in the name of Alexander Duggan, the French identity card and the third document, both in the name of André Martin, with the Jackal's photograph as an old man. The Jackal pays the forger and asks for the original cover of his driving licence. The forger tries to blackmail him.

*A new sequence linked up with the previous one*

- (s) *Obstacle or enemy spotted:* The forger tells him: "I have in my deed-box the original of your licence, the developed plates and all the negatives of the photographs I took of you and, I am afraid, one other picture taken of you very quickly while you were standing under the arc light without your make-up."  
—"How much?"  
"One thousand pounds, monsieur."
- (t) *Obstacle or enemy attacked:* The Jackal raises some objections, pretends to agree and takes the three documents.
- (u) *Obstacle or enemy removed:* Pretending to enjoy a joke of the forger, he closes on him, knocks him out and breaks his spine. He hides the body in a trunk, takes the keys of the dead man, leaves the place and drops the keys in a sewer.

*2nd August*

15. The Jackal goes shopping and buys various articles. He books a self-drive car for the next morning and a room for the week-end in a small hotel in Zeebrugge.

7. Kowalski decides to get in touch with JoJo.

*Continuation of the sequence under (b') 6*

(a) *Message acted upon:* In Rome's main post office Kowalski gets a phone call through to JoJo in Marseilles. JoJo confirms the bad news about little Sylvie. He has changed his flat and gives Kowalski



his new address which Kowalski writes down. (JoJo is not alone: two Secret Service agents with their Colt .45 in hand have made sure that he gave the right message and a false address. They take JoJo and his wife, pick up Sylvie from her school and take the whole family to a private hotel high in the Vercors.) This function will be pursued later on.

*3rd-4th August*

16. The Jackal spends the week-end at the sea-side and returns to Brussels on Sunday 4th in the evening.

8. "It habitually took Kowalski a long time to make up his mind. But by Monday morning he had come to his decision."

*5th August*

17. *Shooting practice:* The Jackal packs the rifle and goes by car to the Ardennes. He finds a lone forest track and practises shooting. (The shooting practice is very elaborately described from p. 134 to p. 140).

9. Kowalski must go and see Sylvie. He will tell Rodin nothing and will be back within two days.

*Continuation of the sequence under (b') 6*

(a) *Message acted upon* (contd.) Kowalski books a return ticket to Marseilles with Alitalia for Wednesday 7th, at 11-15 am.

*6th August*

18. The Jackal goes back to Brussels and goes to see Goossens, taking the rifle with him.

*Continuation of the sequence under (b) 5*

(1) *Conditions fulfilled:* The tubular casing is ready; the parts of the rifle fit exactly. The Jackal pays Goossens, he packs the rifle camouflaged in its tubular casing in a cheap suitcase.

19. The Jackal goes to the main railway station and deposits the suitcase containing the rifle in the left-luggage office. He leaves the same day for London by plane.

*7th August*

10. Kowalski reports at the airport for his flight to Marseilles. Here a new sequence is linked up: 'ambush.'

*The sequence inserted under (b') 10*

- (p) *Quarry spotted:* Kowalski is followed to the airport by two of Roland's men. There is a relay of messages: from the airport to Rome, from Rome to Paris, from Paris to Marseilles.
- (q) *Quarry ambushed:* Kowalski lands at Marseilles. He goes to the city-office and from there, takes a taxi to the address given him by JoJo: a block of flats looking fairly new. He climbs to flat 23 and is attacked by six men. A terrible battle follows in which three of the assailants are wounded before Kowalski collapses unconscious.
- (r) *Quarry captured:* "Twelve hours later Kowalski was lying on a cot in a cell beneath a fortress barracks outside Paris."

*8th August*

20. In London, the Jackal obtains an international driving licence in the name of Alexander Duggan. He buys a few suitcases. In the first, he puts two sets of clothes, one matching the identity of the Danish pastor Jensen, the other, that of the American student Marty Schulberg. The two passports are hidden in the lining. He adds two pairs of spectacles and the preparation for hair tinting. In the second suitcase he puts the

clothes bought in Paris, including the long military coat and hides the two false identity papers in the name of André Martin in the lining. In the third suitcase he puts the clothes of Duggan. In his handbag he packs some plaster of Paris, bandages, sticking plaster, cotton wool and a pair of stout shears.

*9th August*

21. The Jackal receives a letter from Rome giving him the Paris phone number of the OAS contact. The number is MOLTOR 5901. The name of the agent is Valmy.

*10th August*

11. Kowalski regains consciousness. He is taken for interrogation. He breaks down under torture and his rambling confession is taped.

12. Three Secret Service men spend the whole night in typing out Kowalski's ramblings. They send a copy to Rolland.

*11th August*

22. The Jackal receives a letter from his Swiss banker informing him that the money has been transferred to his account.

13. Rolland spends the early hours of the day in studying Kowalski's confession. He gathers from it the main features of the conspiracy: Rodin has hired a blond foreigner called the Jackal to kill de Gaulle.

14. Kowalski dies.

15. Rolland sends a message to the Home Minister.

*The sequence inserted under (b') 15*

- (m) *Message sent*: Rolland types his report to the Home Minister, Roger Frey.
- (n) *Message received*: Frey summons Ducret, head of the presidential security, and both agree that "the plot is of an exceptional danger."
- (o) *Message acted upon*: Frey seeks and obtains an interview with the President at 4 pm. De Gaulle listens to him. His reaction is typical: "The President of France should not be seen cowering before the menace of a miserable hireling. . . of a foreigner." He forbids Frey to make the plot known to the press and refuses to change either the time or the venue of his coming public engagements. All measures must remain secret.

Frey calls a meeting of all the heads of the Secret Service and, as a strict secret, tells them about the conspiracy.

16. Enquiries made in Vienna at the pension Kleist: on the 15th June (see p. 22) a certain Schulz received the visit of two men and of a third one in the evening.

At the end of an inconclusive discussion. Maurice Bouvier, head of the Brigade Criminelle says: "The entire structure of the security forces in France is powerless for want of a name. . . . But to find a name, and do it in secret, is a job for pure detective work." "And who is the best detective in France?" asked the Minister.—"The best detective in France is my own deputy, Commissaire Claude Lebel." [see (b') 2]—"Summon him," said the Minister. Lebel is summoned and briefed.

(At this point of the novel Lebel appears as the counterpart of the Jackal: the cause of the OAS is in the hands of the Jackal; that of the French Secret Service, in the hands of Lebel.)

*Lebel's character (indicators and informants)*

"Precise, methodical, painstaking. . . a plodder, hen-pecked. . . . His dress was dowdy, a crumpled suit and a mackintosh. His manner was mild,

almost apologetic. . . . Behind the mildness and the seeming simplicity was a combination of shrewd brain and a dogged refusal to be ruffled or intimidated by anyone when he was carrying out a job.” Also incorruptible. At the time of his briefing, “his heart sank. They were asking—no, demanding—the impossible. He had nothing to go on. There was no crime—yet; there were no clues. There were no witnesses, except three whom he could not talk to. Just a name, a code-name, and the whole world to search in.”

17. Lebel obtains the permission to take young inspector Caron as his assistant. He tells him to get for him a direct link with the Criminal Police of seven countries and arranges for telephone calls with them the next morning.

*12th August*

23. One of the top agents summoned by Frey was Colonel Saint-Clair de Villauban, “a fanatical Gaullist, but equally fanatical concerning his own ambition.” After the meeting with the Minister, he spends three hours writing his report. He returns home at midnight. His wife and two children have gone to their country house and his mistress welcomes him home [see (b) 9].

*The sequence inserted under (b) 23*

- (g) *Fraud conceived:* When Jacqueline Dumas was asked to become friendly with Saint-Clair, it was with the hope that she might extract some vital information from him [see (b) 9].
- (h) *Fraud performed:* She pretends to be anxious about his late homecoming and inquires where he has been. At first, he dismisses her questions.
- (i) *Fraud successful:* Lulled by her caresses he yields to her curiosity

and says: "Now they (the OAS) have hired a foreign assassin to try to kill him (de Gaulle)."

(Upon this a quick succession of messages are sent:)

(m) *Message sent*: At 2 am Jacqueline sees Saint-Clair asleep; she leaves the bedroom and goes to the hall and phones MOLITOR 5901.

(n) *Message received*: Valmy, a middle-aged schoolmaster receives the message.

(o) *Message acted upon*: At dawn Valmy goes to the post office and places a call to a Rome hotel.

(m) *Message sent*: Rodin sends a bodyguard to phone the Jackal in his London flat.

24. After breakfast the Jackal tidies his flat.

(g) *Fraud conceived*: Duggan's false passport and driving licence.

(h) *Fraud performed*: The Jackal puts on Duggan's clothes and takes Duggan's papers.

(i) *Fraud successful*: The Jackal has no difficulty in boarding the plane for Brussels.

(n) *Message not received*: "As the taxi moved away (from the Jackal's flat), the phone began to ring."

25. The bodyguard returns to the hotel and tells Rodin that he was unable to contact the Jackal. The three OAS men discuss the situation and are helpless.

26. The Jackal lands at Brussels. He leaves his three suitcases in a locker, goes to the railway station and reclaims the suitcase with the gun. He goes to a small hotel.

(g) *Fraud conceived*: Buying of

18. Lebel arrives in his office at 6 am. He contacts the various Foreign Services by phone.

19. In London, Anthony Mallinson agrees to pursue the enquiry.

20. In the evening, meeting of the Heads of the French Secret Service in the office of the Home Minister. Valmy's message to Rome has been intercepted. They wonder how Valmy came to know

bandages, plaster of Paris, etc. [see (b) 20].

- (h) *Fraud performed*: He plasters his foot and leg, screws the tubes containing the gun into a crutch<sup>5</sup> goes by taxi to the airport, as an invalid, withdraws his three suitcases and boards a plane for Milan at 4-15 pm.
- (i) *Fraud successful*: He has successfully smuggled the gun into Italy. At Milan, he enters a toilet, cuts the plaster open, unscrews the crutch and puts the tubes containing the gun in the suitcase containing the military clothes. He goes to a hotel.

about Kowalski's confession. Lebel reports: America: two possible names; Belgium: one; Germany: one; Italy: none; Britain: so far none, but enquiry goes on through the Special Branch.

### 13th August

27.(g) *Fraud conceived*: The Jackal buys steel wire and soldering implements. He hires a second hand Alfa Romeo.

(h) *Fraud performed*: In a hired garage he welds the steel tubes containing the gun into the inner flange of the Alfa's chassis. He goes back to the hotel for the night.

28. A new inserted sequence (see above, 23):

(h) *Fraud performed*: Jacqueline coaxes Saint-Clair to tell her the latest.

(i) *Fraud successful*: In bed, Saint-Clair says: "The man is

21.(s) *Enemy spotted*: Superintendent Thomas of the Special Branch is informed that a certain Charles Calthrop was rumoured to have had a hand in the murder of the Dominican dictator Trujillo. By the evening he has found the flat of the Jackal and interviewed the neighbours.

(t) *Enemy pursued*: During the meeting of the chief of the French Secret Service, Thomas phones Lebel and gives him the name and description of Charles Calthrop.

called Calthrop. We have him already in the bag."

29. (m) *Message sent*: Jacqueline phones Valmy.  
(n) *Message received*: Valmy receives the message.

*14th August*

30. End of sequence under (b) 27: Thomas pursues investigation: Calthrop was in the Dominican Republic in 1960. Lebel has checked all the foreign entries into France: no man called Calthrop has entered France since the beginning of the year.  
(i) *Fraud successful*: The Jackal leaves Milan by car and goes through the French Customs. He has smuggled the gun into France.  
31. End of sequence under (b) 29:  
(o) *Message acted upon*: The Jackal reaches Cannes and phones Paris, MOLITOR 5901. Valmy informs him that Lebel is after him; he knows his code-name and his original name. He advises him to quit. The Jackal decides to carry on.

[At this point of the novel, the two protagonists, the Jackal and Lebel, are pitted one against the other. The function (b) – (b') will from now on take the form of the sequence 'Hunt' which will be developed in two parallel streams:

- |                    |                      |
|--------------------|----------------------|
| (p) Quarry hiding  | (p') Quarry spotted  |
| (q) Quarry escapes | (q') Quarry pursued  |
| (r) Quarry caught  | (r') Hunt successful |

The function (q) – (q') will pass through a succession of phases.]

(p) *Quarry hiding*: The Jackal feels safe: the French police are hunting a man called Calthrop. Then let them, and good luck. He is Alexander Duggan and can prove it.

(p) *Quarry spotted*: During the meeting of the French secret Service, Lebel is called to the phone: Thomas informs him that Calthrop is travelling under the false name of Alexander Duggan.



*(q) Quarry escaping:*

1. The Jackal travels by car to the little town of Gap. He has plenty of time, for the day set for the kill is not yet upon him.

2. *(h) Fraud performed:* Jacqueline coaxes Saint-Clair into telling her the latest news.

*(i) Fraud successful:* Saint-Clair tells her about Duggan.

3. *(m) Message sent:* Jacqueline phones Valmy.

*(n) Message received:* Valmy receives the information.

4. *(v) Trust sought:* In the evening the Jackal, after dinner, makes the acquaintance of a frustrated baroness.

*(w) Trust obtained:* He spends the night with her.

*15th August*

5. The baroness leaves early for her castle. The Jackal looks up her address in the hotel register.

*(a) Message acted upon:* See (q) 3. From the post office the Jackal phones Valmy. Valmy tells him that his Duggan-cover is known to Lebel.

6. *(g) Fraud conceived:* The Jackal buys two brushes and two tins of paint. He leaves the hotel by car, at 11-05 am.

*(h) Fraud performed:* He drives till about noon, finds a lonely spot, paints his car deep blue and changes the number on the

*(q) Quarry pursued:*

1. The hunt for Duggan starts in earnest.

2. Reports pour in: Duggan came to Paris from Brussels on 22nd July; from Paris to Brussels on 31st July; he stayed in a small hotel near the Place de la Madeleine between 22nd and 30th July.

3. At 10 am Lebel is informed by Thomas that Duggan flew from London to Brussels on the 12th August.

4. At noon, more reports are received: the Jackal left Brussels for Milan on the 12th August. He crossed from Italy into France

plates. He decides to go to Corrèze where the baroness lives.

- (i) *Fraud successful*: By 3-40 pm he is on the road, undetected.

on the 14th morning, registered for two days at the Hotel du Cerf, Gap. He was driving a white Alfa Romeo with the registration number MI 61741.

5. Lebel flies to Gap by helicopter, reaches at 4-50 pm and is told that Duggan left at about 11 am.

6. He flies back to Paris to attend the meeting at the Minister's office. Saint-Clair accuses him of negligence. Lebel offers to resign, but no one is inclined to take his place.

#### *16th August*

7. At 1 am the Jackal reaches Ussel. He drives on, hides the car in a wood, removes the tubes containing the gun and places them in the suitcase with the military clothes. He ties the two other suitcases with his tie and slings them over his shoulder. He gets a lift to Egletons and takes the only taxi available to the castle of the baroness.

8. (x) *Trust proved true*: See (q) 4. The baroness brooding over her husband's infidelity welcomes him.

7. In the meeting of the Secret Service Lebel reports: the white Alfa has been seen nowhere. No registration in any hotel in the name of Duggan.

*17th-19th August*

9. Every morning the Jackal phones to Valmy who has nothing to report. The baroness' suspicion is aroused.

8. For three days Lebel has nothing to report at the evening meeting. The others are convinced that the Jackal has left France. Lebel alone believes that he is still on the job.

*20th August*

9. In the morning a game-keeper discovers the abandoned car. By noon the Ussel police is alerted. The amateurish painting reveals the fraud. The false numbers are found out.

10. At 6 pm Lebel gets the news. He alerts the Ussel police.

10. (h) *Fraud performed*: Jacqueline welcomes Saint-Clair after the meeting. "She took her lover's head and pulled it towards her bosom. 'Tell me about it,' she cooed."

11. At 8 pm meeting with the Minister. Lebel openly declares that the Jackal is tipped off.

(l) *Fraud successful*: Saint-Clair tells her that Lebel suspects a leak.

12. He flies by helicopter to Ussel.

11. (m) *Message sent*: Jacqueline phones Valmy.

(n) *Message received*: Valmy receives the information.

*21st August*

(o) *Message acted upon*: In the morning the Jackal phones Valmy who tells him that the situation is critical. The car has been found.

12. (s) *Danger spotted*: Going back to the bedroom, the Jackal sees that the baroness has opened his luggage and holds parts of the rifle in her hand.

(t) *Attack*: He throws her on the bed and with the edge of his palm breaks her neck.

(u) *Attack successful*: The baroness is dead.

16. (g) *Fraud conceived*: See (b) 3 & 4.

(h) *Fraud performed*: The Jackal disguises himself as the Dane Pastor.

(i) *Fraud successful*: He closes the door from inside, lowers his luggage through the window, jumps out, takes the baroness' car, reaches Tulle after dropping Duggan's suitcase into a gorge and boards the Paris train at 1 pm.

13. Lebel is back in Paris.

17. The train reaches Paris at 8-10 pm. The Jackal goes to a hotel on the Quai des Grands Augustins.

14. At 6 pm Lebel is informed that the baroness has been killed, and that the Englishman left the castle in the morning with the baroness' car.

15. Lebel is informed that the baroness' car has been found in Tulle and that a Danish pastor left for Paris by the 1 pm train.

16. The meeting at the ministry is strained and tense. Saint-Clair tells Lebel that he has failed.

The Minister will ask de Gaulle to cancel all public appearances.

17. Lebel decides to organize a little wire-tapping.

*22nd August*

18. A phone-call has been intercepted: Jacqueline informing Valmy that the Jensen-cover is found out. The call has been taped.

18. At 7 am the Jackal phones Valmy.

19. Early in the morning Lebel goes and arrests Valmy.

20. Lebel picks up the phone and, in the name of Valmy, tells the Jackal that the trail from Corrèze is lost. He traces the number from which the Jackal phoned.

19. (g) *Fraud conceived:* See (b) 3.

(h) *Fraud performed:* The Jackal goes by taxi to the Gare d'Austerlitz, deposits the suitcase with the gun and the military clothes, checks in a small hotel in the name of Schulberg, goes to his room and disguises himself as Schulberg.

(i) *Fraud successful:* He leaves the suitcase with the clothes of Jensen in the wardrobe, goes out by the fire escape and takes a taxi to the Latin Quarter.

21. Lebel goes at 8-30 am to the hotel from which the Jackal phoned and is told that Pastor Jensen checked out one hour earlier.

22. At 2 pm meeting at the ministry. Lebel plays the tape of Jacqueline's last message to Valmy. Saint-Clair rises, leaves the room and resigns.

23. The Minister reports that de Gaulle has refused to cancel his public functions. He has allowed to release to the press the news

that the baroness' murderer is hiding in Paris.

24. Lebel surmises that the Jackal has planned to kill de Gaulle on the Liberation Day, 25th August.

25. At 8 pm. Thomas reports from London that among the foreigners who reported the theft of their passports to their consulate, two might fill the bill: Jensen and Schulberg. Description of Schulberg is given. Photograph will follow.

26. At 10 pm second meeting at the ministry. Lebel gives the description of Schulberg. The Minister decides to take off Lebel from the job and thanks him for his valuable assistance.

*23rd – 24th August*

- 20. (v) *Trust sought*: The Jackal wanders in the Latin Quarter till after midnight of the 22nd. He then goes to a bar and sits at the table of an old 'queer'.
- (w) *Trust obtained*: The old queer takes to him and invites him to his flat.
- (x) *Trust proved true*: They both go to the flat. On the way, the Jackal reclaims his luggage from the Gare d'Austerlitz.
- 21. (s) *Danger spotted*: At noon the Jackal asks to see the TV news. On the screen the face of

Marty Schulberg is projected. His host looks at him with horror.

- (t) *Attack*: The Jackal strangles him.
  - (u) *Attack successful*: The man is dead and the Jackal hides the body in the coat-cupboard.
22. (g) *Fraud conceived*: See (b) 6 & 10. The Jackal remains in the flat till the 24th evening, when he cuts his hair and prepares what he will need on the next day.

27. "During two days Paris was searched as it never had been before." All in vain.

28. The Minister is desperate. He summons Lebel, gives the programme of the festivities, including the presentation of medals at 4 pm, the next day, on the square before the Gare de Montparnasse. Security measures will be most elaborate. Lebel obtains the permission to wander about and to see if he can spot the Jackal.

#### *25th August*

- (h) *Fraud performed*: The Jackal disguises himself as André Martin. He has Martin's identity card and his certificate as war-victim. He straps his right leg and his buttock, and screws the tubes containing the gun into a crutch. He bears the old beret and the military coat falling below the knee. He goes slowly, hopping on one leg and leaning upon the crutch.
- (i) *Fraud successful*: He shows his identity papers to the CRS man in charge of the barrier, with the address, 154, rue de Rennes, and is allowed to pass.

29. The morning ceremonies are performed without trouble.

30. At about noon Lebel prowls around the edge of the crowd.

23. (p) *Quarry spotted*: He moves to the house chosen during his first visit to Paris [see (b) 8].
24. (s) *Danger spotted*: He sees the landlady.
  - (t) *Attack*: He asks her for a glass of water. As she goes to the kitchen tap he knocks her out.
  - (u) *Attack successful*: He untraps his right leg, ties the hands and feet of the landlady, covers her mouth with sticking plaster, puts her in the scullery and closes the door.
25. (p) *Quarry spotted* (contd.) See (p) 23: He takes the keys, goes to the sixth floor, enters the room, opens the window, assembles the rifle and fixes the telescopic sight. He eases the first shell into the breach. He has a little less than two hours to wait. The President is about to give the first medal. Through the telescopic sight the Jackal sees de Gaulle's face.
  - (q) *Quarry cornered*: "Softly, gently he squeezed the trigger."
  - (r) *Quarry escapes*: "Before the bullet had passed out of the end of the barrel, the President had bent forward to kiss the veteran on both cheeks."  
"Behind his gun, the Jackal started to swear." He ejects
31. (p) *Quarry spotted*: After 3 pm Lebel reaches rue de Rennes. Questioned, the CRS man tells him about the elderly invalid who has gone to 154, rue de Rennes.
  - (q) *Quarry pursued*: Taking the CRS man with him, Lebel goes to the house, smashes the door of the parlour, finds the landlady still unconscious. Both men rush upstairs and find the door locked.  
Lebel orders the CRS man to blow the door open. The



the spent cartridge and places  
a new one.

CRS man enters the room.

26. Turning round the Jackal sees  
the CRS man and shoots him.

### *Encounter*

"Above the dead man's body Claude Lebel stared into the eyes of the other man. 'Chacal,' he said. The other man said simply, 'Lebel'. He was fumbling with the gun, tearing open the breech. Lebel saw the glint as the cartridge case dropped to the floor. The man swept something off the table and stuffed it into the breech. His grey eyes were still staring at Lebel. He's trying to fix me rigid, thought Lebel with a sense of unrealism. He's going to shoot. He's going to kill me. With an effort he dropped his eyes to the floor. The boy from the CRS had fallen sideways : his carbine had slipped from his fingers and lay at Lebel's feet. Without conscious thought he dropped to his knees, grabbed the MAT 49, swinging it upwards with one hand, the other clawing for the trigger. He heard the Jackal snap home the breech of the rifle as he found the trigger of the carbine. He pulled it."

(r) *Quarry caught:*

(r') *Hunt successful*

"Half a magazine full of nine-millimetre bullets hit the Jackal in the chest, picked him up, half turned him in the air and slammed his body into an untidy heap in the far corner near the sofa. As he fell, he brought the standard lamp with him. Down below the band struck up 'Mon Régiment et ma Patrie'."

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- 1 This article is to be read as the natural conclusion of a previous article "From Aristotle to Roland Barthes" published in JJCL vol. 13.  
2 I have used the popular edition of Gītā Press, Gorakhpur, for both the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata*.

- 3 For the *Iliad* I have used the translation of E.V. Rieu (Penguin Classics).
- 4 Another similar theme is that of the warrior's preparation for battle. It occurs four times in the *Iliad*, and every time the catalysts are the same and given in the same order: (1) tying the greaves to the legs; (2) fixing the cuirass on the chest; (3) throwing the sword-belt over the shoulder; (4) seizing the shield; (5) placing the helmet on the head; (6) taking the spear(s). The difference between the four instances is due to the number of indicators and informants. In the case of Agamemnon and Achilles, they are more numerous than in the case of Paris and Patroclus. Book III, 328-338 (11 lines) - Paris equips himself.  
Book XI, 16-44 (29 lines) - Agamemnon equips himself.  
Book XVI, 130-139 (10 lines) - Patroclus equips himself.  
Book XIX, 367-391 (25 lines) - Achilles equips himself.
- 5 At this point of the narrative, the author does not speak of the crutch. The reader knows that the Jackal takes the rifle with him: "The fibre suitcase that had formerly contained the gun lay empty. . . . When he was finally ready he slid the cheap fibre case under the bed . . . and prepared to leave." (p. 226). The reader is left guessing. It is only at the end of the book (p. 371), that he is enlightened: "Re-buttoning the coat, he took up the crutch, the same on which he had hobbled through the airports of Brussels and Milan twelve days earlier."

## COMPARATIVE LITERATURE FOR INDIA

Comparative Literature does not mean a mere comparing of literatures with a view to setting one against the other. Here the main idea is to broaden one's perspective by discovering trends in the particular culture that serves as the background of the literature and thus to understand the precise relation between literature and the other spheres of human activity. As a matter of fact, the comparative study of literature is not different from the study of a particular literature except for the fact that here one studies side by side more than one literature. Hence the subject matter becomes vaster and the perspective broader. Such precisely is what is contemplated in other comparative disciplines like comparative religion, comparative mythology, comparative philosophy and comparative philology; everywhere one is expected to look beyond the borders of his nation or province. In essence, in comparative studies boundaries are extended, deliberately transcended with a view to understanding the subject of study more meaningfully and in the context of the totality of human life. In the context of Indian literature this would mean a study of literature, classical and modern, against the entire Indian background.

Friedrich Schlegel spoke in 1798 of "Universalpoesie" and Goethe twenty-five years later spoke of "Weltliteratur" and both these noteworthy concepts imply that there is always something in literature, especially in literature as represented in the best poets, that can be regarded as the common heritage of man and consequently has the comprehensiveness to include every aspect of human experience. In comparative literary studies an effort is made to understand this breadth of human experience as well as aesthetic excellence. To make this meaningful an effort is to be made to know and appreciate all the available and relevant literatures. This is essential, for here we are dealing with something like literary history which aims at understanding literary move-

ments, periods and influences as well as the relations of literature to the social, political and philosophical background. No doubt in our general study we look up literary masterpieces but without any reference to their time or country. There we do not think of relations which attract our special attention in comparative literature.

Literary works often reveal similarities or resemblances in point of style, structure, mood or idea; they also share certain common conventions which are followed by a large number of works of similar nature, perhaps having a common bond in point of history: very often they are works inspired by a certain model and are consequently influenced by it. It is quite possible, for instance, to understand Aśvaghoṣa or Kālidāsa in isolation, but when one makes an attempt to read the two poets in relation to one another and also in relation to their times, one comes to notice certain vital features which one would have ordinarily missed altogether. The 'renunciation' themes of Aśvaghoṣa and the 'activist' themes of Kālidāsa, the Buddhistic tones of the former and the clear Brahmanical leanings of the latter can be understood properly when these poets are understood against the Kuṣāna and the Gupta times in Indian history and when they are compared with one another. Even though Aśvaghoṣa and Kālidāsa are poets of different faiths, yet both are equally indebted to Vālmīki. Vālmīki, Aśvaghoṣa and Kālidāsa appear to have so many ideas, expressions and conventions in common that a reading of the three authors together enables one to understand and evaluate them more fully and more significantly. As an illustration of a work serving as a model to many poets one can refer to the *Meghadūta* of Kālidāsa. Once we know and appreciate the aesthetic excellence of the *Meghadūta*, we can understand the composition of the several *dūtakāvyas*. On the other hand internal references indicate clearly how Kālidāsa himself was inspired by Vālmīki to write his poem.

Such historical studies within one literature reveal the different indigenous influences that play a part in the shaping of an author, and of course there may be influences coming from other literatures as well. Such studies of influences may be termed 'genetics', for in some respects a literary work resembles an organism and it grows and evolves like a biological specimen. An organism grows and evolves in an environment and draws its sustenance from whatever it comes in relation with; a literary work develops more or less in the same manner. In comparative literary studies, when an effort is made to seek parallels and offer textual criticism in the light of these findings, what is really attempted is a scientific search

for the genesis of a work. Rājaśekhara was right when he remarked that “nāsti acuraḥ kavijanaḥ”, that the poets do lift but they are no thieves. Poets, consciously or unconsciously, assimilate from the others elements that have appealed to them for one reason or another. There is a time-honoured way of reading celebrated texts or literary works by concentrating attention only on the linguistic excellences and the embellishments; but this method obviously suffers from the flaw of giving undue importance to the elements that are at best only the external garb of the experience of the poet. The comparative literary way which offers deeper insights is therefore a better way of reading.

Objections may be raised against the study of influences and similarities on the ground that in such studies subjectivism and impressionism are likely to play a very large part. If a scientific attitude is properly maintained in such studies, it cannot be denied that they do materially contribute to an increased understanding and enjoyment of a literary work.

Comparative literary studies can include the application of the usual aesthetic values to a literature, an understanding of the different literary movements and tendencies of an age, studies of themes and ideas that appear in different literatures, and finally the study of genres, of structures and patterns. But perhaps the most important of all are literary relations.

In the light of this one has to ask oneself the question regarding the basis of Indian comparative literature. The extent of literature that one would be dealing with here is very vast, considering that we have to include classical literature as well as modern literature produced in the different languages of the country. Comparative literary studies are a challenging task and for this purpose the traditional way followed in the Sanskrit commentaries on classical works by itself would not be sufficient. It is true that these commentaries are not merely semantic studies as is commonly supposed, for they include textual criticism, an indication of parallels, a discussion of embellishments and the *rasa*, a discussion of the form of the work, an indication of provincial traits, and a discussion of style; yet what is lacking is the wider historical perspective that is present in comparative literature. This traditional method, then, enriched with modern critical ideas and perspective could be the basis for Indian comparative literature. In what follows an attempt is made to show how this is possible in literary criticism, and in studies of themes, forms and literary movements.

*Literary Criticism*

Comparative literary studies also include comparative studies in literary criticism. Literary criticism can be described as an effort to discover and appreciate the aesthetic excellence of a work. In the context of Indian literature, the classics of literary criticism are Bharata, Daṇḍin, Ānandvardhana, Kuntaka and Abhinavagupta. Though there are a number of books dealing with poetics, yet it is these authors who have held sway in the field. Rasa, alaṃkāra, rīti, dhvani and vakrokti are concepts around which poetic criticism always moved. Abhinavagupta supplied a metaphysical foundation for this criticism. The entire Sanskrit and Prakrit literature has been appreciated in the light of these ideas and even the literature in modern Indian languages is very largely appreciated in more or less the same manner. In modern criticism the concepts of rasa and sādharmaṇikaraṇa do appear again and again. Since the acquaintance with Western literature this traditional Indian criticism has been enriched with new valuable concepts taken over from the West and has been improved upon a good deal, investing it with a new significance. Often this criticism itself has been studied in comparison with the Western classical criticism as it appears in Aristotle and Horace, for instance, as well as with modern criticism that has appeared in the writings of authors like Matthew Arnold, T.S. Eliot and I.A. Richards. The result is that the Indian aesthetic values have been critically studied in the light of the Western thinkers and philosophers like Kant, Hegel and others. There is also a tendency to think of all the arts together, and art is regarded as a presentational symbolism as suggested by Susanne Langer. Nagendra, Mardhekar, Patankar are modern Indian critics who have made a very significant contribution to the studies in aesthetics. The basis for literary criticism in Indian comparative literature should be primarily Sanskrit poetics, but enriched with the ideas that have come from the influential Western thinkers.

We must be aware of the dangers in this effort to combine the two different traditions, e.g. the danger of overinterpretation and oversimplification. But perhaps the greatest danger is of criticism being completely overwhelmed by philosophy. What is happening in the West in this respect did happen in India when Abhinavagupta wrote his celebrated commentaries on Bharata, Bhaṭṭatauta and Ānandavardhana. Literature after all deserves to be understood and appreciated as literature alone. Literature really has an autonomous world of its

own where the poet or the author is the supreme authority. It is Ānandavardhana who claims full autonomy for poetry, regards literature to be as satisfying as devotion to a deity and views that literature causes a unique delight and holds that śṅgāra is the best rasa in poetry. Abhinavagupta brings in his philosophy to establish the supremacy of the śānta rasa. The problem of the relation between poetry and philosophy is a very intriguing one and comparative studies in literary criticism enable one to have a wider perspective in this matter.

### *Themes*

But perhaps more controversial and yet fascinating would be the comparative study of themes. This subject is often connected with mythology on the one hand and with intellectual history on the other. We speak of 'legends' and 'ideas' and of 'types' and 'motifs' in this context. In the matter of themes early literature like the *Ṛgveda*, the *Upaniṣads*, the *Purāṇas*, the *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyaṇa* have been very liberally utilized by authors even to the present times. Characters and myths, incidents and motifs have been supplied by these early works, and it is always a fruitful study to have a comparative look at such literature for it is interesting to study the recurring themes and their variations. Thus characters like Urvaśī, Naciketas, Dharma, Karṇa, Kuntī, Rāma and Sītā, incidents like those of the Kāñcanamṛga, Krauñcavadha and Kīcakavadha seem to have received a considerable attention from writers in almost all the languages. The story of Urvaśī has passed through several hands as can be seen from the fact that it has been treated by the Ṛgvedic poet, a Brahmanical ritualist, by the Paurāṇika narrators, by Kālidāsa and by Rabindranath Tagore. We witness here the heartless woman of the *Ṛgveda* being turned by Kālidāsa into a very romantic nymph and being regarded by Tagore as the very essence of beauty. One may here refer to the story of Yayāti of the *Mahābhārata* with his unquenchable thirst for the pleasures of the senses being given a new significance by Shirwadkar in his play and by Khandekar in his novel. Khandekar made King Yayāti the representative of the twentieth century man and in the story of the *Mahābhārata* he could read the dilemma of the whole human civilization. The story of Karṇa, the valiant hero and the virgin Kuntī has been the theme of many works. Tagore wrote his superb "Karna-Kuntī Sumbad" while Shirwadkar wrote his play *Kaunteya* and

Sawant his novel *Mrityunjaya* with Karna as the central figure. It is tempting to read in the story of Karna the story of the struggle of the down-trodden for winning recognition in the higher circles of society. Historical figures like Rana Pratap, Shivaji, Madhavarao Peshawa, Rani Durgabai, Ahalyadevi receive a similar treatment and their struggles are given a wider significance and a relevance to the modern times. Mention could also be made of themes that have come from early literature. The Indra-Ahalyā-Gotama story symbolizing the eternal triangle of sex, the Brahmā-Sandhyā and the Yama-Yamī story the motif of incest, the story of Gāndharī woman's self-sacrifice, the story of Kuntī the problem of a virgin mother, illustrate this. One may add here themes like 'separation and recognition' and 'the step-mother's revenge' which seem to have come from the early folklore.

This opens for literary study an almost endless vista of concepts and situations. The epics *Mahābhārata* and *Rāmāyaṇa*, the Buddhist Jātakas and the Jaina stories like those of Haribhadra can be appropriately regarded as a storehouse of themes and motifs for Indian literature. The only dangers to be avoided in such thematic studies are those of over-interpretation and over-emphasis on the trivial and the banal. It would also be wrong to presume that authors dealing with a study are only to reveal differences as well as similarities in the treatment of a single theme by different minds; this should enable one to understand literary works in a better and a wider perspective.

### *Forms*

The study of form occupies an important place in studies in comparative literature. Bharata in his *Nāṭyaśāstra* speaks of the ten forms of drama which have been accepted by all the other writers of dramaturgy. Daṇḍin in his *Kāvyādarśa* speaks of the epics, short poems and also of twofold prose narratives, the kathā and the ākhyāyikā. Later Viśvanātha in his *Sāhityadarpaṇa* seems to have added a few others to these forms. It is indicative of the maturity of early criticism that it does not regard a mode of narration as a criterion of differentiation. Consider the case of the kathā and the ākhyāyikā. The ten forms found in Bharata, Nāṭaka, Prakaraṇa, Bhāṇa, Vyāyoga, Samavakāra, Dīpa, Īhāmrga, Utsrṣṭāṅka, present a very wide range of forms, content and purpose. We have here high serious drama, social plays, plays based on violence and



lamentation, monologues, farces, and these are forms to which authors time and again return. In modern Indian drama there is a marked tendency towards realism in point of themes and language but there is no material change in form. The early farce was more or less a religious satire dealing with the low-class priests, religious mendicants, ascetics and courtesans. The modern farce on the other hand has cast its net very wide and it reveals a much improved taste. Similarly the early monologue was confined to a very restricted field, that of stolen and illicit amours: but the modern monologue, like the farce, has become more refined, subtle and varied. One may in this context refer to the handling of monologues by P.L. Deshpande on the Marathi stage. The themes and characters come mostly from contemporary life.

In the field of poetry, epics are being written on the earlier model but with contemporary themes. The anyoktis, the muktakas and the Prakrit compositions which appear in the *Sattasai* of King Hāla are the forerunners of the modern lyrics but a great deal of variety has enriched this form, thanks to the Western contacts. In early literature we have satiric poetical compositions from Kṣemendra and Dāmodaragupta and their targets for ridicule and criticism are the government officials, court-clerks, the kayasthas, and the courtesans. In prose satires like the *Bharataka-kathās* we have religious satire as here ridicule is poured on ascetics of a particular sect. In modern satires the themes come from contemporary life; political leaders and parties, the so-called social reformers with orthodox convictions, cunning merchants and corrupt officials all find a place here. In early literature too new forms were created by gifted poets and one can refer to the *Meghadūta* of Kālidāsa and the *Gītagovinda* of Jayadeva in this context. The early writers seemed to have almost exhausted all the possible situations especially in love poetry as can be seen from their concept of the 'aṣṭanāyikās'. Modern poetry has in a natural manner become more subtle and more spiritual in the sense that flesh does not play an important role here. The modern poet with his education, his ideas regarding women and with the Western influence, writes more after a Keats or a Shelley than after an Amaru or a Bilhaṇa, or a Jayadeva. The early poets did not seem to make any distinction between poetry and prose, for their prose compositions, like the *Kādambarī* of Bāṇa, are really fine poetry. The modern writers write poetical prose even when they deal with the modern social topics. The significant difference between early prose writers and their modern counterparts is that the former seemed to revel

in constructing the decoration while the latter are interested only in decorating their construction.

The modern forms have a certain fluidity about them though we speak of a tragedy, a comedy, a satire, an elegy, an ode, a sonnet and the like. The study of forms is likely to appear mechanical or artificial, laying stress on the externals rather than on the essence. But it is to be remembered that form has a vital relation to the aesthetic elements, and the study of form in comparative literature is concerned only with understanding this vital aspect of form. It is not concerned with the externals or superficial similarities but with the deeper relations between the theme, the form and the aesthetic excellence the work possesses. The question of forms leads one to the important question of the relation between literature and society. Certain forms thrive in a particular social condition. The absence of tragedy in early Indian literature is a case in point. Philosophical convictions, ideas regarding the aim of literature current among a people, ideas regarding the gods and the like, account for the existence or absence of a particular form among them. In early India the king was next to God: hence literature revolved round the two. Religion plays an important part in deciding the form and the content of a literature. The Alvars in the South and the poets like Kabir, Surdas, Mira, Tulsi and others have given us exquisite poetry as a result of their particular Vaishnavite, Krishnaite or Shaiva leanings. This literature is indeed considerable and has its relation with the hymns of the earlier period. The origin of mystic and devotional poetry is really to be traced to the *R̥gveda* where we have the Vedic poets conversing with their gods with familiarity and intimacy. Nature poetry as such is absent in earlier literature and has gained new depths and insights with the development of the Indian mind and also because of the Western contacts. In the Laharī poems and in Buddhist poetry we have some sublime nature poetry that reminds us of Wordsworth and others. The perception of the divine as the most beautiful also appears in songs like the *Saundaryalaharī* attributed to Śaṅkara.

### *Literary Movements*

Comparative literature takes note of literary movements also. Social and political movements undoubtedly influence literature as can be seen in all Indian literature that has been produced after the contact with the

West, after the appearance of Mahatma Gandhi on the scene and after the attainment of Independence. Widening of horizons, hopefulness and frustration, a certain purity and nobility of thought, an urge for a social revolution and reforms, may be taken as the result of these events in the national life and all languages have been affected by these ideas. It is due to the contact with the West that a certain Romanticism has appeared in Indian literature. English poets like Shakespeare, Shelley, Keats, Byron, Tennyson, Browning have inspired many writers in the different languages. After the appearance of Mahatmaji on the scene the Gandhian ideals and philosophy have inspired authors and in their writings is to be seen an urge for simplicity, purity, nobility and an urge to champion the cause of the down-trodden in society. The hopeful dream that all the ills would disappear once Independence was attained recurs in the writings of so many authors. In the post-Independence period came a disillusionment and writers began to address themselves to the question of the difference between a self-government and a good government. There was a realization in this period that sacrifices had gone unrewarded. Partition had not solved the problems and the untold suffering that many had to go through has been a theme of many good works. The values of which Gandhiji spoke seemed to have been forgotten completely and quickly. Frustration arising out of such a situation is reflected in many works. Satire, fierce satire, caricature, surrealism with a view to depicting life as it is in the raw, begin to appear more frequently in literature. This literature offers a sharp contrast to the literature produced under Gandhiji's influence in the pre-Independence period. But when all this change was taking place in literature, the true Indian tradition of going back to early literature for themes that could be re-interpreted to reflect the contemporary time and moods, also asserted itself in many sensitive minds. *Kamayani*, *Yayati*, *Saketa* are works that readily come to one's mind. *Gitanjali* would remind one of the true Indian mystic poetry. Indian authors have very consciously imbibed all they felt to be valuable and also have been true to the national consciousness in spite of the fact that they come from different languages. There is after all something like an Indian mind to which Suratchandra Chattopadhyay, Visnu Sakharam Khandekar, Bishnu Dey, Dinkar and P.V. Akilandam have an appeal. Differences in language and social conditions do not matter. In fact differences in languages like Hindi, Marathi, Tamil, geographical differences like Andhra, Maharashtra, Bengal or Panjab and cultural differences like the Aryan or the

Dravidian background, do not make any difference in the intensity of this appeal. Early literature has percolated to all the layers of the Indian society through the length and breadth of the country. A reference to this literature, therefore, seems to be natural, if not inevitable, in Indian comparative literature for its basis. It is this early literature that has created this national consciousness, so it is only proper that it should remain the basis for our studies in comparative literature.

## THE STUDY OF COMPARATIVE LITERATURE IN BRITISH UNIVERSITIES

The purpose of this paper is to report on and give some idea of how comparative literary studies are being fostered in British universities. It draws heavily, therefore, on information published by the universities referred to and, in particular, upon chapter 5 of Professor Henry Gifford's book *Comparative Literature*.\*

### *Introduction*

It is no more difficult to define the scope of Comparative Literature than it is to define the scope of English Literature: both are awe-inspiring in their breadth and potential. Sixty years ago at Cambridge Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch ('Q') said of English Literature: "May we not say that everything is, has been, or can be, a subject of English Literature." And the University of East Anglia is now equally comprehensive in its definition of Comparative Literature: "Comparative Literature is the branch of literary study which concerns itself with the basic structures which underlie all literature of any kind. There is, therefore, in theory no limit to its scope."

For practical purposes, however, we have to confine ourselves to something more manageable: within a university the study whether of English Literature or of Comparative Literature has to be limited and defined in the fairly specific and deliberately selective ingredients of a 'syllabus'. This paper is a highly eclectic account of some principles of selection which demonstrate different attitudes towards comparative studies, and which have led, therefore, to different answers being offered

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\*Routledge Kegan Paul, London, 1969

to the basic question put by Professor Gifford: "How is the comparative sense to be fostered and put to use in the disciplined study of literature at university?"

The need for selection is axiomatic. 'Q' stated the case eloquently in another of his lectures: "Man's life being of the length it is and his activities multifarious as they are, out of the mass of printed matters already loaded and still being shot upon this planet, he must make selection. There is no other way." He delivered those words in 1917 (Wednesday, May 9) when much preoccupied with and involved in the controversy which then raged over the English Tripos at Cambridge. And it is with 'Q' that I should like to begin this brief survey of ideas relating to comparative literary studies in British universities. His views on what should (and should not) be taught within a School of English are relevant because British universities today teach literature either in the traditional single school that deals with one literature or in a comparative school that brings two or more literatures together, usually with the purpose of contrasting also the culture and history expressed through them. I shall be discussing both the place of comparative study in a single literature school—a School of English—and the functioning of comparative studies in a school deliberately planned for that purpose.

### *'Q' on the Study of English Literature*

Although 'Q's' thoughts on the study of English Literature are a useful starting point for our discussion, we ought first, perhaps, to remind ourselves of our principal responsibility as teachers of literature. Practical considerations compel us to select the content of a literature syllabus, but professional considerations enjoin us to do so with great care, after due thought to our aims, and in accordance with principles that we should be prepared, if necessary, to defend vigorously and sincerely. In compiling a syllabus we are trying to guide our students towards what we believe to be a sound nucleus of knowledge, out of which, later, their minds can reach to more. The principle which, above all others, guided 'Q' was that the study of literature should serve to teach us 'to be' rather than 'to do' or 'to know'. "To *be* Hamlet," he said, "to *feel* yourself Hamlet—is more important than killing a king or even knowing all there is to know about a text."

He felt deeply about this, and spoke out vigorously to propagate his views because he could remember a time when English Literature had

not been recognized in the universities, and had not been taught in the great public schools (save in those which prepared boys specially for Woolwich or Sandhurst or the Indian Civil Service—"for entrance to which examinations were held on certain prescribed English classics, and marks mainly given for acquaintance with the editors' notes").

He refused to accept the arguments used to defend this neglect of English Literature—one such argument was that the study of English Literature was not sufficiently demanding a discipline because it did not involve mastering a foreign tongue. He freely acknowledged our debt to the Greek and Roman classics, but did not subscribe to the view that this debt made them an acceptable or desirable alternative to the study of our own literature. These models, he said—in words which you may wish to extend to other contexts—"are effete for us, unless we add and mingle freely the juice of our own natural genius."

What he was opposing, of course, was the over-reaction to a valid and perfectly acceptable judgment in the domain of Comparative Literature. The 'classicists' were, in effect, saying that the majority of our best writers have modelled their prose and verse upon the Greek and Roman classics, either directly or through tradition, and that we should therefore seek to master Greek and Latin and the traditions of these literatures in order that we might the more intimately enjoy our own authors and have at hand, should we wish ourselves to write, the models which had guided them. To say this is one thing: to advocate only the study of these models is another.

He was even more opposed to those who went to the other extreme and sought to exclude from the syllabus all that was not genuinely English — aggressively provincial 'Anglo-Saxonists' who saw *Beowulf* as a second *Iliad*, allowed their critical judgments to sleep when praising the virtues of Old English and Middle English writings and, he humorously suggested, preferred to write of the "un-go-throughsomeness of stuff" rather than the "impenetrability of matter"!

Both 'classicists' and 'Anglo-Saxonists' took a view of literature which was divorced from the business of living. The point I want to make is that 'Q's' attitude towards the study of English Literature was essentially liberal and enlightened, and pointed the way towards the inevitable development of the comparative sense in the disciplined study of literature at university. The main tenets which he held to firmly were these:

- 1 Literature cannot be divorced from life. You cannot, for example, understand Chaucer unless you have the background, unless you know the kind of men for whom Chaucer wrote and the kind of men whom he made speak—that is the *social* side with which all literature is concerned.
- 2 Literature being so personal a thing, you cannot understand it until you have some understanding of the men who wrote it. Until you have grasped these men, as men, you cannot grasp their writings. That is the *personal* side of literary study.
- 3 And the third tenet is that the writing and speaking of English is a literary art—to be practised and [if it may be] improved. That is the *communication* aspect of literary studies.

It seems to me that these three tenets are as valid for comparative literary studies as they are for the study of any one literature. In saying that literature cannot be divorced from life, is intensely personal, yet inter-relates people through the communication of ideas and emotions, 'Q' with prophetic vision, was showing us why it was inevitable that literary studies in 20th century Britain had to become less and less insular. "No man is an island, entire of itself," wrote John Donne—nor is any one literature "entire of itself"—especially not in an age when the rate of Man's Ascent has increased so sharply and when man's horizons of knowledge and experience have expanded to such distant limits. Donne's imagery and 'Q's comparative sensitivity are echoed, interestingly, by Tagore in an essay on *Visvasahitya*—the Bengali name he gave to the concept of 'comparative literature':

Just as this earth is not the sum of patches of land belonging to different people, and to know the earth as such is sheer rusticity, so literature is not the mere total of works composed by different hands. Most of us, however, think of literature in what I have called the manner of the rustic. From this narrow provincialism we must free ourselves; we must strive to see the work of each author as a whole, that whole as a part of man's universal creativity, and that universal spirit in its manifestations through world literature.\*

### *The Single Literature School*

It is not surprising, therefore, that the single literature school is now considered by some to be an anachronism. They maintain that, as a

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\*Quoted from Buddhadeva Bose, "Comparative Literature in India", *Contribution to Comparative Literature: Germany and India* (Calcutta, 1973).



subject, English Literature cannot claim to be "entire of itself" and thus to present "a genuine body of knowledge"—to use W.W. Robson's phrase from his 1965 F.R. Leavis lecture. And of course, as Professor Gifford has pointed out, although we are referring to a literature of wide range and vast power, some parts of the European experience have hardly touched it, while, on the other hand, some English authors demand the full perspective of Western literature if they are to be understood, appreciated and rightly evaluated.

An element of comparative study seems essential, even in a single school, if it is to protect itself against the charge of provincialism which 'Q' levelled against the Anglo-Saxonists, if it is to form standards of taste able to appreciate the best in other literatures, and if the glaring background deficiencies of today's undergraduates are to be compensated for. 'Q' would have been appalled to think that students can now be admitted to the study of English Literature without any knowledge of Latin or Greek.

The only practical way in which this deficiency can be compensated for is by reading relevant works in good translation. But where does one draw the line? More and more the student today is being forced out of his own literature in order to understand it. Where does one set the limit to the supplementary knowledge that the student of English literature ought to acquire? We are back again with the problem of selection. Professor Gifford has suggested that we might try to distinguish between knowledge as relevant information and knowledge to develop and refine judgment. A student, he has suggested, ought perhaps to know that the Bower of Bliss in Spenser's *Faerie Queene* derives from Tasso, but he doesn't need to read Tasso—even in translation. On the other hand, even in translation he ought to read Dante and Cervantes and Goethe and Tolstoy and Dostoevsky—all of whom are essential to the judgment of particular authors or to the understanding of whole periods of English literature.

The point which emerges is that English Literature, when standing alone as a subject, needs amplifying; and that an English syllabus at the expense of some period or aspect which is the proper concern of English Literature—comes closer to providing "a genuine body of knowledge" than does the traditional course in English Literature.

I offer as an example of the newer English course the single subject course offered by the University of York (see Appendix 'A'), which though a specialized course in English Literature, encourages close study of

and even in the traditional 'period' papers (eg. "The English Augustans"/"The English Romantics"/"The Victorians") students are advised that "some of the set texts may be in languages other than English". However, the most interesting aspect of this course is the distinction made between "Comparative Literature" (Paper 11) and "Foreign Literature" (Paper 12). Only in the former, it would seem, is the comparative sense fostered and in "Symbolism—Baudelaire to Eliot". In the "Foreign Literature" paper the responsibility seems to be placed upon the student to draw his own comparative inferences—easier perhaps in the courses on "Goethe" and "Dante" than in such a broad course as "Swedish Literature" or in such a highly specialized course as "Some Authors and Topics in Medieval Icelandic Literature".

Before we now pass on to consider how comparative studies function in a school deliberately planned for that purpose, let me state the main argument offered in favour of the single subject school of literature. Although the limits within which such schools must work are evident, provided that comparisons are brought in to illuminate English literature when necessary, to widen the perspectives and to show more clearly what is characteristic and valuable in English writing, then the justification for a single school is that by centering on one literature it "accustoms the mind to continuity" by concentrating on the deep-rootedness and permanence of a literary tradition. Many would go further and maintain that no student ought to embark upon comparative literary studies without having explored the range of and acquired a firm grounding in his own national literature.

### *Undergraduate Comparative Studies*

If the main criticism of the single school of English is that it cannot provide "a genuine body of knowledge" without having recourse to comparative techniques, then the weakness of a comparative school, drawing upon a number of disciplines, is that the student is in some danger of finding in his subject-matter "no self-evident principles of order and cohesion, and of being debarred by the vastness of his own ignorance from working these out for himself".

Comparative studies are very much a feature of the new universities in Britain. This development is a consequence of their attempts to break down the traditional barriers between subjects and thus enable them to offer "a genuine body of knowledge". These studies are offered

either in schools so named as to emphasize that literature transcends national barriers (eg, the School of European Studies at the University of East Anglia—see Appendix ‘B’), or they are offered in schools so named as to foster the comparative sense (eg, the School of Comparative Studies at the University of Essex—see Appendix ‘C’).

You will note that the York syllabus given in Appendix ‘A’, for all its innovations, is still a fairly conventional list of papers and topics. The statements offered by East Anglia and Essex, however, tell students—in a much more informal way—not only what they may study, but also why: “The aim is to introduce you to problems of style in English Literature and the foreign literature of your choice, and then to lead you to questions of literary ‘genre’ and critical method, using the comparative approach.” Even before he sets foot in the university the student’s role as an active participant in deciding what he should study is stressed (what is an open question is the extent to which he can contribute sensibly to this decision and the extent to which he is dependent upon the tutorial guidance offered): “The comparative study of literature does not require you to be constantly synthesising, and the precise balance of your Honours seminars is, within certain clearly defined limits, a matter for you to decide yourself in consultation with your Adviser.”

In theory, the advantages of such an interdisciplinary approach as these syllabuses exemplify are “coherence, a sense of direction, and a uniformity of critical standards” which heightens the relevance of each part of the course to the whole. Even in a well-integrated course, however, it is possible that these advantages will be offset by certain disadvantages—breadth may have been achieved at the cost of profundity, integration may from time to time have been contrived out of random collocations, and—perhaps most serious—the student may have to depend too much upon his teacher because there are too many things new to him and in need of explanation.

This, as I see it, is the main problem which faces comparative studies at the undergraduate level. ‘Q’'s students with their knowledge of the Greek and Roman classics and of the Bible were better prepared for the study of Comparative Literature than are the vast majority of today’s undergraduates—in fairness, however, it must be said of them that they are probably more intellectually curious, and therefore more in sympathy with the comparative sense than the undergraduates of ‘Q’'s day might have been. The problem today is not *whether* the comparative approach should be introduced into literary studies—but *when*. In the University

of Warwick, for example, although there is an important comparative element in the main English honours degree and in the joint honours degrees with English (English/Italian, English/German, English/Spanish, for example). Comparative Literature as such is not taught as an undergraduate subject—which brings me to the concluding section of this survey.

### *Postgraduate Comparative Studies*

Two kinds of study are offered at the graduate stage: either the course lasting one year which resembles undergraduate work in the supervision it requires; or the project of independent study for two years or more which leads to the presentation of a thesis.

The one-year course may include a short thesis; but primarily it consists of lectures/discussions, the main difference being that the student brings to his studies a greater intellectual maturity, a wider range of knowledge, and a better study technique than does the undergraduate. Many see this as the ideal pattern for the disciplined study of literature at university—a single literature course illuminated by comparative insights, followed by a course specifically in Comparative Literature which has as its aim the clarification of certain key problems. Such a one-year postgraduate course in Comparative Literature is outlined in Appendix 'D'.

There are very wide opportunities for effective research. Professor Gifford sees the most rewarding of these being in the field of translation. Versions of the same poet from different epochs, he suggests, may be compared, to trace the alterations of sensibility; characteristic turns of one language may be distinguished from those of another, revealing the national temper and tradition expressed through each; or translation may help to modify our understanding and our critical estimate of the original work; or we may look for significance in the changes of emphasis, the suppressions and additions a translator has allowed himself. But the most obvious field for study is that of the principal literary forms—epic, tragedy, comedy, lyric poetry, satire, the novel. If it is true that today's course emerged from yesterday's research and may well stimulate tomorrow's research, then you may be intrigued by two courses in the field of the novel offered at the University of East Anglia.

The first is on fairly traditional lines—"The Rural Novel: Realism and the Little Community". Rural life has been seen by some as a

cultural backwater, by others as a way of life irreplaceable in its social and human values. What are these values, and how can the novel make use of them? What are rural communities really like? For what reasons does an author write rural novels for a predominantly urban readership? Do rural characters reveal inadequacies and strengths different from urban man? Are rural novels more relevant than other 'realist' novels to contemporary anxieties and preoccupations? If anyone doubts the potential of this theme as a topic for research in the field of comparative literary studies, I commend to his attention the wide-ranging bibliography which concludes Raymond Williams' fascinating book *The Country and the City*.

But what of the stimulating research which led to the second course and of the further research which it might suggest! This course is innovative and is very much a product of our age: "Eroticism in the Modern Novel". An analysis of the treatment of erotic elements in major literary works of the 20th century; the technical and stylistic difficulties that the writer encounters at the moment when he decides to deal with the scabrous areas of libido, Eros and overt sexual activity; the main opposition between a mimetic representation of sexual encounters and the epic, surrealist, visionary manner that is prevalent in so many major masters of the erotic in this century as well as in the past; varied approaches and techniques in conveying the mysterious world of sex and the contradictory nature of human lust.

East Anglia, let me remind you, does say of Comparative Literature: "There is, in theory, no limit to its scope"!

#### APPENDIX 'A'

##### *University of York: Single Subject Course in English Literature*

Although a specialised course in English Literature, the single subject course encourages close study of selected topics in related disciplines, particularly in foreign literatures. Candidates offering English as a single subject for a BA degree are required to choose ten of the following papers (some Selected and Special Papers are double papers and are equivalent to a selection of two papers).

- 1 Old English Literature
- 2 Middle English Literature
- 3 Shakespeare and his Contemporaries
- 4 The Seventeenth Century
- 5 The English Augustans
- 6 The English Romantics
- 7 The American Nineteenth Century
- 8 The Victorians
- 9 The Twentieth Century
- 10 Selected Subject
- 11 Special Subject (*Comparative Literature*)
- 12 Special Subject (*Foreign Literature*)

Choice of papers will be subject to the discretion of the English Board of Studies, and will include Paper 2 and at least five others of the Papers 1 to 9; candidates who elect not to take Paper 1 will normally be required to take at least one of Papers 11 and 12. Papers 6 and 7 cannot be offered together.

For each of the period papers (1-9) a small number of texts, authors, and topics will be set for close study, but papers will not be restricted to set material; some of the set texts may be in languages other than English. The selection of topics for Papers 10-12 is determined by the special interests of staff and students. The topics for 1975-76 included:

#### Paper 10 Selected Subject

Greek Tragedy (Single or Double Paper)  
Chaucer  
Medieval Romance  
Art and Literature in the Middle Ages  
English Art 1300-1500  
Late Medieval and Early Tudor Literature  
Shakespeare the Dramatist  
Music and Theatre  
Literature of Love in the Sixteenth Century  
Introduction to the History of Art  
Rembrandt and Rubens  
Literature and Philosophy (bridge paper)  
English Thought 1815-1898  
English Education: Mill and Arnold  
George Eliot  
Melville  
D. H. Lawrence  
Structure and History of the English Language

The Structure of Modern English  
Modern American Poetry  
Twentieth Century Socialist Theatre and Film

**Paper 11 Special Subject (Comparative Literature)**

Germanic Literature and the Middle Ages  
Medieval French Literature  
Petrarch in France and England (Double Paper)  
Symbolism—Baudelaire to Eliot (Double Paper)

**Paper 12 Special Subject (Foreign Literature)**

Roman Poetry (Single or Double Paper)  
Medieval Icelandic Literature  
Special Authors and Topics in Medieval Icelandic Literature  
Dante (Double Paper)  
Goethe (Double Paper)  
Flaubert  
Thomas Mann  
Swedish Literature

**APPENDIX 'B'**

*University of East Anglia: Honours Course in Comparative Literature*

*The Preliminary Programme*

In your first two terms, you take courses in Literature, Linguistics and one of the following languages at Honours level: Danish, French, German, Norwegian, Russian, Swedish. (In the case of French, German and Russian, Honours level means post-Advanced level, but the three Scandinavian languages can each be started from scratch.)

The literature course is not a survey course: the number of texts studied is quite small. The aim is to introduce you to problems of style in English Literature and the foreign literature of your choice, and then to lead you to questions of literary genre and critical method, using the comparative approach. One good way of doing this is to study the interaction of languages and literatures in the work of important literary translators. The linguistics component helps you to develop an objective descriptive approach to the texture and structure of literary works.

*The Honours Programme*

Comparative Literature is the branch of literary study which concerns itself with the basic structures which underlie all literature of any kind. There is therefore in theory no limit to its scope, and literatures in all languages and styles, and their relationship to other art-forms, can be studied comparatively. In practice of course we have to confine ourselves to something more manageable. So at UEA we concentrate on the literatures of Europe and North America. But comparative method does not replace the demand for close, sensitive reading and the development of individual responsiveness to literature.

The Honours Programme includes seminars covering English, American and European Literature. Language study is essential to Comparative Literature, and you must be prepared to spend between a quarter and a third of your time working on it, with a view to taking Final Examinations papers of full Honours standard in the language of your choice. All students spend one year of residence abroad, either as students at foreign universities or as language assistants in foreign schools. There are facilities for taking a second language, either at Honours or Ancillary level. Examples of the sort of course we offer in literature are: Renaissance Sonnet Cycles; Coleridge and Romantic Criticism; Dickens, Balzac and Dostoevsky; Literature and the Problem of Evil; Comedy; The Historical Novel; Modern Tragedy. You are also able to pay special attention to one or more of the literatures at present taught in the University (English, American, French, German, Russian, and Scandinavian). Single-author courses, on Goethe or Ibsen for example, are also available. The comparative study of literature does not require you to be constantly synthesising, and the precise balance of your Honours seminars is, within certain clearly defined limits, a matter for you to decide yourself in consultation with your Adviser.

Some students in Comparative Literature prefer to combine literary study with the pursuit of another discipline, such as Linguistics (which is a particularly suitable minor subject in this context). Other subjects too, History, History of Art, Music, Philosophy or Sociology, can provide an interesting complement to the study of literature. Again, your Adviser will help you choose a suitable minor if you wish to take one.

*The Final Assessment*

Apart from the language papers already mentioned there are three papers



in Comparative Literature: a theory paper, a genre paper and a paper on a special period. You have to choose two further papers, subject to certain safeguards, from among the range available within the University. The Comparative Literature papers are intended to test your grasp of theoretical questions, to probe your understanding of the problems facing a particular genre such as the novel and to assess your knowledge of a particular period which you have chosen to study in a thoroughgoing comparative manner.

#### APPENDIX 'C'

##### *University of Essex: First Year Scheme in the School of Comparative Studies*

The Department of Literature at Essex brings together the study of literature which in many universities is divided between Departments of English and of Modern Languages. There are great advantages in this concentration. Those who teach bring to a common centre their experience of the literature of different nationalities and languages, while the student's awareness of literature is widened by the requirement that his studies must not be confined to a single national literature. Comparative work is achieved either within a single course (in which more than one literature is studied), or by the choice of options in different national literatures.

The department tries to set its study of literature, widely diffused though it is in time and place, within a perspective of European history and thought. The first-year course in the Enlightenment, taken by all students, provides a common point of reference. Renaissance literature may thus be seen as a necessary precedent to the Enlightenment, while Romanticism and the 19th century literature of the New World and Eastern Europe may be seen as emerging from it.

#### *Course Structure*

##### *1 The Enlightenment*

Every student in the first year of the School of Comparative Studies, whatever degree scheme he intends to enter in his specialist years, follows

a common course on the European Enlightenment, its background and its aftermath. The core of this course is a series of weekly seminars, taught by members of the departments of the School, in which emphasis is placed on the study of a number of important texts from the period 1660-1815. A course of lectures on the culture and society of eighteenth-century Europe is also provided.

In recent years, the course has examined important texts by such writers as Rousseau, Burke and Goethe, and major topics such as the rise of the novel, literature and science, and art and propaganda of the French Revolution. The texts and topics change from year to year, but the continuing emphasis of the course is on the Enlightenment as that period in European history which in many ways shaped not only modern Europe but also greatly influenced such foreign areas as Latin America, Russia and the United States. All the departments of the School take part in this common course, which is organized on an interdisciplinary basis.

## 2 *Language (or Philosophy)*

Every student in the first year also takes an appropriate course in French, or German, or Russian, or Spanish and Portuguese or a course in philosophy provided by the Department of Philosophy.

## 3 *Optional Courses*

In addition to the common course on the Enlightenment and the appropriate language (or philosophy) course, each first-year student selects two courses from a list of options. In the case of students intending to enter a degree scheme with an area specialisation, two introductory courses on the specialist area are taken. All other students select two courses from the following: art, government, history, linguistics, literature, sociology or one introductory course on Latin America, Russia or the United States.

### APPENDIX 'D'

#### *Sketch of a One-year Postgraduate Course in Comparative Literature* (from COMPARATIVE LITERATURE by Henry Gifford)

This course has been designed for students whose first degree was taken

in either English or a modern language. It is assumed that the former category will have a good working knowledge of one foreign language and some acquaintance with its literature; and that the second category will have studied English either as a subsidiary or one-year additional subject. There are five elements in the course, which I have arranged in the three-term syllabus.

### *First Term*

#### a. *Introduction to Comparative Method*

This might be done largely through the examination of critical writings that bear on the topic of comparative literature, e.g. Auerbach's *Mimesis* (the final chapter); Baudelaire, 'Edgar Poe, sa vie et ses oeuvres'; Lawrence, chapters from *Studies in Classic American Literature*; Pound, 'The Serious Artist'; Eliot, 'What is a Classic?', etc.

#### b. *The Practice of Translation*

Exercises in translating from the foreign language a candidate offers, accompanied by the reading of such commentaries on the translator's art as Arnold, 'On Translating Homer', and by the study of established translations against their originals.

#### c. *Study of a Genre (in English and one other literature)*

This would deal with selected work in the genre (e.g. picaresque novel, realist novel, verse satire, Symbolist poetry), concentrating perhaps on two or three authors belonging to each literature.

### *Second Term*

#### a. *Study of a Special Problem (as it arises in English and one other literature)*

Problems that suggest themselves are, e.g. the critic and society (Arnold, Belinsky, Sainte-Beuve, De Sanctis); censorship, hidden or overt (as in the Victorian and the nineteenth-century Russian novel); 'verse as a dying technique'; urban sensibility (in, for example, Dickens, Baudelaire, T.S. Eliot, Blok); the poet and patronage (Dryden, pope, Molière; Goethe, Zhukovsky, Pushkin).

- b. *The Practice of Translation* would continue throughout the second term. Likewise  
(c) *Genre Study*.

*Third Term*

The writing of a short thesis (10,000-15,000 words) on a limited topic from (b), (c) or (d).

It will be noted that the course demands a study of English literature as an equal component with the foreign literature chosen.

Topics such as the relations of literature to painting, music or philosophy are reserved for the next stage (M.Litt. or Ph.D.), where, if they are studied, it should be in connection with at least two literatures (not necessarily English among them).

## LITERARY HISTORY AND COMPARATIVE LITERATURE A METHODOLOGICAL QUESTION

I have borrowed this title, at least the main part of it, from a recent book on Indian literary history<sup>1</sup>, to acknowledge our debt to its author as comparatists in India for opening a question which is very very relevant to us. All I am going to do here is perhaps supplement it in a minor way, with something that as a matter of fact we have been concerned with at Jadavpur for quite some time now: looking at a single modern Indian literature from a comparative point of view. Is that, in the first place, a valid method, a method distinct from that in the single literature? And secondly, is there any need of it, that is, do we have to have it too for a full understanding of the single literary history? Let me admit that my 'specialization' is not Indian literature, not even Bengali literature; but since it is method that I am concerned with here I thought I might as well speak of something, at least raise a question about something, that seems most urgent to me at the moment.

### I

Madhusudan wrote some Ovidian 'epistles' for a number of 'heroic' women from ancient Indian mythology and a 'literary' epic like a Greek on an episode borrowed from the *Rāmāyaṇa*. Vidyasagar adapted Shakespeare's *Comedy of Errors* as well as Kālidāsa's *Śakuntalā*. Bankimchandra wrote *Krishnacharitra* almost like a Comtian. Jyotirindranath translated both *Mṛcchakaṭikam* and *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme*. Rabindranath has been called a 'European' poet in the Bengali language—an exaggeration of course but an exaggeration that might have a grain of truth in it—and was yet a modernizer of many ancient Indian themes and images. Sudhindranath Datta was an avowed Mallarméan in aesthetic principles, translated from French, German and English poetry, and

showed perhaps some Buddhist influence in his last poems. Buddhadeva Bose adapted the R̥ṣyaśṛṅga and Electra myths and translated Baudelaire-Rilke-Hölderlin as well as Kālidāsa's *Meghadūta*. The title of one of Bishnu Dey's books of poems is *Urbashi o Artemis*.

These are of course some stray facts, but surely there are many more of them and the question is: how are we going to deal with them in the history of Bengali literature of the past, say, 125 years? Are we going to reckon with them, that is, take cognizance of the structure that emerges from them or leave them as such? Do they make valid literary history or should we relegate them to biographical vagaries and individual 'source' hunts? This, I suspect, is a question that may be raised about quite a few other modern Indian literatures as well, if not all. There are two ways Comparative Literature can perhaps be indispensable to Indian literary history: one, in the fixing of relations and analogies between the different Indian literatures and possibly thus in the compiling of a history of modern Indian literatures, let us say in the lines projected by the International Comparative Literature Association for modern Western literatures; and two, in what I am speaking of here, in the discerning of structures in the histories of the single Indian literatures.

Of course if these structures are restricted to the particular literatures themselves, that is, if they do not involve any other literature in any way at all, then the comparative literary method will be absolutely irrelevant. If for instance we discover that in modern Indian literature  $x$ , the history of the past 125 years is a sequence  $x_1 x_2 x_3$  etc, without any infiltration of, say,  $y$  at any level, then we must not, just must not, speak of Comparative Literature. And if it happens that  $y$  is another modern Indian literature, then we are relegated to the Comparative Literature of the first kind which, incidentally, is not my concern here. (That means in order that we have Comparative Literature of the second kind, our  $y$  must be a non-modern Indian literature).

Another word by way of introduction. I am not approaching literary history purely contextually—that is, define a context first and then get to the texts as a causal reflection of the context. On the other hand, I am looking primarily at the texts, not of course as individual structures here but as a structure together, and then perhaps relate this structure to the context. In other words, instead of taking a tension for example of two texts as an illustration of a tension in the context, I shall analyze the tension of the two texts first and then perhaps relate it to a possible tension in the context.

## II

Individually, the stray cases I have quoted have each a couple of extra-Bengali aspects—Sanskrit-Pali-Prakrit on the one hand and Western literature on the other, which turns them, as it were, into a Janus each. A series of such Januses cannot be a matter of accident, there has to be a rationale behind their structure and it is the business of literary history to discover that rationale. One of course would not claim that all the texts over the past 125 years have this dual structure, or all the authors or all the works of the authors who have such texts, but that a great many texts and authors do have this structure is a very very significant fact. In other words, there *is* a substantial amount of Sanskrit-Pali-Prakrit impact on the modern Bengali texts together with a substantial amount of Western impact. To speak of one without any mention of the other is quoting partial literary history. It is in the structure that literary history lies, and unless we speak of the two together we will not fully understand the nature of Bengali literature over the past 125 years.<sup>2</sup>

Of course all these texts belong to their times; for instance, Madhusudan's "Greek" epic is as much 19th century as his confessional poems, or Buddhadeva Bose's version of the R̥ṣyaśṛṅga myth no less 20th century than his own fiction; it will be ridiculous to claim the contrary. What the two impacts do then is not shift the texts to another time or another place and thus give them an absolutely esoteric taste in the end, but, clothe them, as it were, in a different dress. But why? Surely the need must have been there, for without that there could not have been this consistent a tendency. I think unless we recognize this question and attempt an answer to it, our task as literary historians will be left incomplete.

Now can that be done in a purely single literary method? Surely all literary historians writing within a single literary framework are fully aware of the impacts in bits, as influence on a certain author or a certain text, but not as impacts in any totality, as impacts of one literature upon another literature, for that requires a different kind of method. To relate, say, Buddhadeva Bose's *Meghadūta* translation or translations from Baudelaire, Rilke and Hölderlin to the rest of his works, or to the works of others of his generation, or to relate his adaptation of the R̥ṣyaśṛṅga myth to Rabindranath's poem on that theme or his play on Karna to Rabindranath's "Karna-Kunti-Sambad" is good literary history, but good single literary history. And if we work our way back to Aeschy-

Ius, Sophocles and Euripides in search of Buddhadeva Bose's 'source' for his play on Electra we may be moving out of the limits of Bengali literature, but only incidentally. Source hunts are extremely individualized, and even within the bounds of an individual author's works, extremely atomized; all we are concerned with are fragments, and fragments whose interrelations are not necessarily within our interest. So, however much varied might be the alien sources and however much varied our knowledge of such sources, they do not as such fall into a pattern. They do not, within the single literary method.

It may be that Comparative Literature does not have a literary theory of its own, a literary theory that is distinct from that of single literatures. But there is absolutely no doubt that Comparative Literature has a method of its own, a method that is distinct from that of single literatures. And it is here that Comparative Literature has a lot of relevance to the Bengali literary history of the past 125 years, and by analogy perhaps to the other modern Indian literary histories as well. For relation to other literatures cannot be studied in any other way. It comes broadly under the category of influence which has a rather sophisticated method of its own, perhaps the most important branch of comparative literary method—certainly the 'French' school will still hail it so. As to what influence is, or better 'impact', for that sounds more appropriate here, or better still *Wirkung* (effect); whether influence/impact/effect is more a matter of what is received than of what is given; and whether it goes into the very blood of something instead of being confined to the surface and is thus not fully and exactly discernible, are questions that have been long debated. We need not reopen this debate here and try to settle the question for good, all we are concerned with is to arrive at a complementary literary history through an analysis of a dual influence/impact/effect.

Of course there have been individual and isolated studies of such influences/impacts/effects, especially of Western literature, but they do not add up to literary history. For literary history is not merely a pile of facts, but the structure that underlies that pile and unless that structure is discerned, our task as literary historians is not fulfilled. One may raise a question here about the validity of this historiography, insisting that literary history is primarily concerned with literary genres and styles and not with literary relations which ultimately are extra-literary. This of course is a purist position and its exact opposite is the position that literary history is an offshoot of socio-political and economic history.



Literary history is surely related to socio-political and economic history, but we have to arrive at that rather than begin from there. And the purist position is clearly a little too eclectic: how does it help us to look into, say, the origin and development of a particular genre without relating it to time? And why should a 'baroque' or 'rococo' style be significant, I mean historically, unless we know that it is the product of such and such times? We may do an individual text purely formally—genre-wise or stylistically, but 'history' is quite another thing. After all we are using the word, the least we can do is speak of it analogically.

Perhaps we can understand the Western impact independently, but the impact of Sanskrit-Pali-Prakrit? Hard, unless of course we claim with T.S. Eliot that all use of tradition is a matter of ordinary and everyday history. But there is something special about these 'recreations' from ancient India, isn't there? Whether or not they are a classical 'revival', there is a conscious endeavour in them, unlike the unconscious assimilation that Eliot spoke of. How are we going to take this—why should anyone be so conscious about something which after all is in his life-blood? Sudhindranath Datta once said that the very fact that someone was writing in Bengali proved that he belonged to the tradition. Still we are always going in search of it. It is like a party of city-dwellers making excursions into the country in search of their 'roots' there. Surely that cannot be understood independently unless we impute a rather unusual, almost perverse, trait to our national character.

But perhaps this can be understood structurally in relation to our 'Westernization'. It may be that because we have such a large degree of Western impact on our literature, we try to find our roots in the ancient Indian classics. The lure of Kālidāsa that we see in Rabindranath, for instance, or more than anything else, the numerous 'recreations' of myths from the *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyaṇa* are perhaps really a reaction to all the lure that we have had and still have of the Western letters, from Homer onwards to Herbert and Hay (please pardon the alliteration). Perhaps there is a law of variation operating here, the more the 'Westernization' the more the 'Indianization'. To quote an analogy, in Rabindranath's *Chaturanga* the Mill-Bentham of the first 'quartet' leads almost inevitably to the Vaisnava ecstasies of the second, and neither is absolutely wrong or absolutely right. Gora too grew 'Hindu'. This law of variation is perhaps most illustrated in the case of the Indian writers in English: because they are Westernized even in the very language they are writing, Westernized almost to a degree where

they may even lose their Indianness, they are perhaps so consciously Indian in their themes and imagery. The main problem here is the problem of identity.

Of course the literature I have been speaking of is written literature and the people who have written it are people who have had a certain degree of English education, either direct or indirect. It is a coincidence all right but an interesting coincidence that four out of the five major Bengali poets after Rabindranath took their MA degrees in English and taught English for some or most part of their lives, and although the fifth never finished his English MA he perhaps acquired the widest range of knowledge in not English alone but other Western literatures as well. Besides he was one of the first Indians to teach Comparative Literature when it was founded by, significantly, one of the other four. Suppose we focus on this latter, what do we see, I mean by way of 'Westernization'? From his early youth he was an ardent reader of English literature and through the English translations, of other Western literatures, some of his critics even accused that his Bengali was often a close adaptation of English—and surely some of his phrases in the early writing and even some syntactic experiments were quite English; and yet when he was doing his major translations from Western poetry, he also turned to Kālidāsa and gradually, past Kālidāsa, to the *Mahābhārata* for myths he might 'recreate' in drama and even for a monumental interpretation—his last major work. The way he woke up to ancient India from the midst perhaps of the deepest influence on him of Western literature was, analogically speaking, somewhat like the way Rilke's *Sonnets to Orpheus* came when he was in the midst of writing his *Elegies*. What I mean is that the 'Indianization' was perhaps more than a mere reaction to the 'Westernization', the two were complementary.

What then was Buddhadeva Bose's identity? What was Madhusudan's, a much more glaring case of Western influence? Or Rabindranath's, perhaps a no less one though it does not show that much on the surface? Contextually, this question of identity can be probed deeper. With their English education do they not show a colonial character? Or is their conscious Indianness an attempt to counter that? A colonial Indian, who has been given a colonial education by which he should feel inferior and should look up to the white Europeans for standards, and who has been exposed to modern technology through them, to print for example, may, may necessarily, while adulating emulating imitating their superior forms and their superior technique, recreate his own

glorious past in order to retain at least a minimum degree of self-respect. Especially when the same past seems to fascinate the white Europeans also. To quote an analogy from our political history, our nationalism too might have had a similar genesis. This is not a criticism, this is history, which means we cannot revoke it but can analyze it.

Significantly in folk literature, whatever folk literature of this period has been preserved and collected, we do not have any Janus structure of this kind. We may have images there, a great many of them, which found their way out of the historical experience, but that perhaps is all. This is not to say that folk literature has no relevance, as a matter of fact it might have all the relevance that is possible, but the point is, it has been outside the pale of intellectual history. So, what we are concerned with here is a literature that, the contextualists would say, is causally bound to be 'Westernized' and 'Indianized' at the same time. In order to illustrate this structure further I would like to do a little focusing now: I have thought of texts from Buddhadeva Bose, Madhusudan and Rabindranath. Only a brief glance really.

### III

I have said elsewhere that no ancient myth can be 'recreated', that what can be done is that the ancient myth can be used as a symbol. This is as much true of Buddhadeva Bose's 'recreation' of the *Ṛṣyaśṛṅga* myth as that of the *Electra* myth. Both *Tapasvi o Tarangini* and *Kolkatar Electra* are texts which should be finally understood in view of his life-long reflections on love and marriage, on ideal and compromise, on *sanyasa* and *samsara*; from his first novel *Saḍa* which came out the same year as he made his debut in poetry, to his very last, one of his main concerns was this duality. Surely the focus in both the texts is on the first, on love, ideal, on *sanyasa*; but the other too is no less felt. Buddhadev's Clytemnestra, as also the princess *Ṛṣyaśṛṅga* was married to or the mother of the courtesan who seduced him into civilization, has no less a valid rationale. Anyway, this is not the place to enlarge on all this, all we are interested in at the moment is that Buddhadeva Bose took one of these myths from the West (besides the obvious 'sources' we may also mention Hoffmannstahl whose works, especially *Electra*, found a very favourable response from him) and the other from ancient India. Why? Because of some biographical coincidence, because it happened that Rabindranath's poem on the particular Indian myth had

once inspired him and that in a course he once taught in the United States he took a very close look at ancient Indian mythology, etc etc? Because he was a learned man and knew his Greek tragedy and in the same course in the United States took a close look at ancient Greek mythology too, etc etc? Sure. But surely there is more here for the literary historians.

And let us think of Madhusudan, a century earlier (a poet incidentally whom Buddhadeva Bose did not quite understand): why should he write like a Greek on something he borrowed from Vālmīki? In the first place, did he write like a Greek? It can be shown that it was Vālmīki who rather wrote like the particular Greek he had in mind, Homer, that in other words, there was a lot in common between these two who he thought so unlike. It can also be shown that he really wrote like some of the 19th century European 'Romantics', like Shelley for instance. But the point is not who he really wrote like, the point is that he should feel that he should write like someone—some European that is. A sense of inferiority? Or is it that because of his intimate knowledge of Western literature, which certainly was fabulous for his time and for any time for that matter, he felt absolutely at home with the Greeks and Romans and Italians and others? In any case, are we going to confine again to biography, perhaps the most exciting in the past 125 years, or think of literary history as well? The point is that while writing "like a Greek" he should take a subject from the *Rāmāyaṇa*. Why? Why should he not confine to contemporary experience? There may be a biographical and single literary answer to this question: he wanted to write an epic, surely to prove partly that it was possible to create epic grandeur in the Bengali language, and chose a favourite subject (when a friend suggested a national subject he did not quite reject it, only he felt he was not quite up to it yet, of which he however wrote a few lines later). But when we think of the subject of his first narrative poem, of his Ovidian epistles, of his first play, we can claim a certain degree of consistency here, to explain which along with his unparalleled 'Westernization' we shall also have to turn to a different method.

Perhaps the Bengali literary history of the past 125 years needs a complementary method most in the case of Rabindranath, because to some he is really the first European poet writing in Bengali while to others he is perhaps the most Indian of all the Bengali poets of this period. Sudhindranath Datta used to say that although Madhusudan's epistle "To Som from Turu" had a European garb, in spirit it was provincial, whereas Rabindranath's dialogue of "Kuch and Dehjani" was entirely

European in spirit in spite of its absolutely Indian look, for to him (Sudhindranath) Tara was a Bengali woman but Debjani a symbol of womanhood. By 'European' Sudhindranath obviously meant 'Romantic' idealism. Speaking of the Western influence on Rabindranath Buddhadeva Bose once attracted a lot of criticism, for he claimed that though there was not much external evidence there was enough internal evidence to prove it. Anyway the text I would like to very briefly mention here is *Raja*. Its source is a Jātaka tale, but form mainly Western, or rather we would never have had a form like its without a very serious Western impact. Rabindranath had admitted in his preface to an earlier play that the dramatic ideal for his generation was Shakespeare, and although he had developed a lot from his first full-length play *Raja o Rani*, entirely Shakespearean in form, he retained this influence to an extent almost all his life, in the double-deck structure for instance. This is true of *Raja* too. But otherwise it is a symbolic play for which Rabindranath might have had something to do with the Belgian playwright Maurice Maeterlinck. I have elsewhere shown that it has a perfectly Aristotelian plot structure and in spite of its 20 scenes might be treated as a play in two acts, somewhat like Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*. The Jātaka tale is no doubt used as a symbol, but that too to communicate something that is very very Indian. This duality of form and theme is in the least a matter of biography, and surely the best way it can be understood within the Bengali literary history is in terms of the duality of influence/impact/effect that I have been speaking of.

\*I am aware that there is a third impact, a so-called "Islamic" impact, but that perhaps is not so comprehensive ; still a consideration of that may add a new dimension to this structure.

## সাহিত্য-ইতিহাসের দাঁড়া?

আমি বাংলা সাহিত্যের সম্পূর্ণ ইতিহাস লিখেছি। আমার লেখা সাহিত্য-ইতিহাসের বিবরণ অনেকের কাছে ‘ষথার্থ’ অর্থাৎ যেমনটি হওয়া উচিত তেমনটি হয়নি ব’লে মনে হয়েছে। অথচ তাঁদের কোনো স্থির নিশ্চয় নেই যে তা কেমনটি হওয়া উচিত ছিলো। তাই বাদবপুর বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের তুলনামূলক সাহিত্য বিভাগের অধ্যাপক শ্রীযুক্ত নরেশ গুহ আমাকে অনুরোধ ক’রে আসছেন যে আমি যেন কিছু লিখে প্রশ্নটির সহপাঠ্য নির্ধারণে কিঞ্চিৎ আলোকপাত করতে পারি। নানা কারণে নরেশবাবুর অনুরোধ রাখবার পক্ষে আমি মনের আনুতলা পাচ্ছিলুম না। তার প্রধান কারণ এই যে বাংলা যাদের মাতৃভাষা তাঁরা অধিকাংশই বাংলা সাহিত্যের প্রধান-প্রধান রচনার কোনো ধার ধারেন না। তাঁদের সাহিত্য-ইতিহাসের জ্ঞান সাহিত্য-ইতিহাসের বই প’ড়ে লক। সুতরাং তাঁদের কাছে এ-আলোচনার কোনো মানে নেই। কিন্তু নরেশবাবু অধ্যবসায়ী ব্যক্তি। তাঁর নির্বন্ধ এড়ানো গেলো না।

এই প্রবন্ধে আমি যা লিখছি তা আমার নিজের উপলব্ধ সত্য ও তথ্য। কোনো বিদেশী সাহিত্য-ইতিহাস প’ড়ে বা দেখে অথবা এ-বিষয়ে বৈদেশিক আলোচনা অনুধাবন ক’রে অথবা শুনে লেখা নয়। সে-কথা পাঠকদের আমি জানিয়ে রাখছি। যা শুকপাঠ নয়, যাতে কোনো বুকনি নেই এমন রচনা যাদের রুচি নেই তাঁরা যদি আমার এই প্রবন্ধ উপেক্ষা করেন তবে আনন্দিত হবো।

সুপরিচিত ‘ইতিহাস’ কথাটি এখন একটি শব্দ যার মানে আমরা সবাই জানি। শব্দটি কিন্তু আসলে একটি বাক্যাংশ, ‘ইতি হ আস’ অর্থাৎ এই রকমই ছিলো। সম্পূর্ণ বাক্য ‘ইতি হ আস পুরাণম্’ অর্থাৎ এট রকমই ছিলো সেকালে। পুরাণ বাক্যটি সংহত হ’য়ে দুটি পৃথক শব্দে পরিণত হয়েছিলো, ‘ইতিহাস’ ও ‘পুরাণ’। ‘ইতিহাস’ বোঝাতো অনন্তত আগান, অর্থাৎ অকল্পিত কাহিনী (traditional

story)। আর ‘পুরাণ’ বোঝাতে। জনশ্রুত গল্পেরও প্রাচীনতর আখ্যায়িকা বা গল্প অর্থাৎ মিথ্ (myth)। এই লক্ষণ অনুসারে ‘মহাভারত’ ইতিহাস, আর সব পুরাণ। এখানে লক্ষ্য করতে হবে, ‘রামায়ণ’ ইতিহাসও নয় পুরাণও নয়, কাব্য। অর্থাৎ রামায়ণের কথাবস্তু জনশ্রুত আখ্যান অর্থাৎ অকল্পিত কাহিনী নয়, পরিকল্পিত কাহিনী, স্মৃতির কাব্য।

ইতিহাস বলতে এখন আমরা যা বুঝি, history, তা আগে আমাদের দেশে ছিলো না। না থাকবার যথেষ্ট কারণ আছে। সেকালে আমরা মানুষকে তার মর্ত্যরূপে অনুভব করতুম না, করতুম তার জন্মজন্মান্তরবাহিত সত্তার প্রবাহমূর্তিতে। কালকেও আমরা তাই দিন রাত্রি ঋতু সংবৎসরের বাইরে খণ্ডাখণ্ডি করিনি। ছিলো স্ববৃহৎ যুগ মহন্তর কল্প ইত্যাদি মহাকালের মালবিস্তার। তত্পরি বাইরের ঘটনা তা যত বড়ো বা প্রচণ্ডই হোক ভারুকের মনে কোনো ছাপ ফেলতো না কেননা তা বিধির বিধান ব’লে মেনে নেওয়া হ’তো। বড়োছোর তা জনমানসে প্রতিফলিত হ’য়ে এসে অবশেষে কোনো মিথের মধ্যে মিলিয়ে যেতো অথবা অবতারের নবলীলা ব’লে গৃহীত হ’তো। (এর নজীর বেশ আধুনিক কালেও মিলছে। শূন্যপুরাণ ও ধর্মপূজাবিধানে যে ‘নিরঞ্জনের কন্ঠা’ কাহিনীটুকু আছে তার মূল্য হ’লো কোনো এক সময়ে কোনো এক স্থানে ধর্মের পূজা-আয়োজন মুসলমান সৈন্তের আক্রমণে বিধ্বস্ত হয়েছিলো। সেই কাহিনী বিবৃত হয়েছে বিষ্ণুর নবাবতার রূপে।)

এখনকার দিনের ইতিহাসের কাছাকাছি যায় এমন বস্তু সেকালে একমাত্র ছিলো প্রবর-গোত্র-গোষ্ঠী তালিকা (genealogical table) এবং ‘বংশ-ব্রাহ্মণ’ বা গুরু-পরম্পরা। কোনো-কোনো উপনিষদে গুরু-পরম্পরার কিছু তালিকা আছে। সেখানেই সেকালে ইতিহাসের একটু ছোঁওয়া লেগেছে।

সাহিত্য-ইতিহাসের আরও ক্ষীণ ছোঁওয়া পাই অশ্বঘোষ কালিদাস ও বাণ এই তিন প্রসিদ্ধ কবি কর্তৃক পূর্ব-কবিদের উল্লেখ। অশ্বঘোষ (নবীন) প্রাচীন কবি-মনীষীর তুলনায় তাঁদের বংশধর নবীন কবি-মনীষীর প্রশংসা করেছেন। কালিদাস বলেছেন, রচনা পুরানো হ’লেই যে ভালো হ’তে হবে তা নয়, আর নতুন হ’লেই যে প্রশংসার যোগ্য হবে না তা নয়। অপকৃপাতী লোকেরা (‘সন্তঃ’) বিচার ক’রে পুরাতন ও নবীনের মধ্যে যেটি ভালো তা স্বীকার করেন। আর যারা ‘মূঢ়’ তাদের বিবেচনা অপরের কথা অনুসরণ করে। (কালিদাসের এই উক্তি সর্বকালের সাহিত্য-বিচারের গায়ত্রীমন্ত্র হওয়া উচিত।) বাণভট্ট তাঁর পূর্ববর্তী কবিদের বড়ো তালিকা দিয়ে তাঁদের সকলেরই উচ্চ প্রশংসা করেছেন। (বাণের সাহিত্যবিচারের মূল্য বেশি নয়, তবে তাঁর উক্তির চাতুর্য সর্বাংশে প্রশংসনীয়।)

বাংলায় সাহিত্য-ইতিহাসের বীজ পুঁতেছিলেন রাজেন্দ্রলাল মিত্র তাঁর একটি ছোটো প্রবন্ধে। সে-কথা অগ্রত বলেছি, এখানে আর পুনরুক্তি করলুম না। তার পরে যারা বই ক'রে লিখেছিলেন তাঁদের মধ্যে তিন-চার জন ছাড়া অপরের নাম করা এখানে নিপ্রয়োজন। একজন হলেন রামগতি ত্রায়রত্ন, একজন রমেশচন্দ্র দত্ত, একজন হরপ্রসাদ শাস্ত্রী আর একজন দীনেশচন্দ্র সেন। রামগতির বইয়ের (১৮৭২) মূল্য কিছু এখনো আছে, তবে তা ঐতিহাসিক। কবিকঙ্কণ ও তাঁর রচনা সম্বন্ধে রামগতি নিজে অল্পসন্ধান করেছিলেন এবং কিছু নির্ভরযোগ্য তথ্য দিয়েছেন। সমসাময়িক লেখক বঙ্কিমের 'দুর্গেশনন্দিনী' সম্বন্ধে তাঁর নির্ভীক মতামত উল্লেখযোগ্য। রমেশচন্দ্র ইংরেজীতে লিখেছিলেন বিশেষ ক'রে তাঁর সমসাময়িক সাহিত্যের উপর। রমেশচন্দ্রের মতামত মূল্যবান। হরপ্রসাদও লিখেছিলেন ইংরেজীতে, একটি ছোটো প্রবন্ধ (১৮৯১), কিন্তু এই নিতান্ত ক্ষুদ্র রচনাটিই দীনেশচন্দ্র সেনের 'বঙ্গভাষা ও সাহিত্য' গ্রন্থের (১৩০২) বীজ। দীনেশবাবুর গ্রন্থ প্রসিদ্ধ। স্থূললিত রচনা। আলোচনা উচ্ছ্বাসপূর্ণ, তবে ঐতিহাসিক দৃষ্টি তেমন প্রখর নয়। এঁর ইংরেজী বইও আছে (১৯১২), এবং তাতে আলোচনা সম্পূর্ণতর। দীনেশবাবুর দৃষ্টি বিশেষ ক'রে ষোড়শ থেকে অষ্টাদশ শতাব্দীর প্রতিই নিবদ্ধ ছিলো।

তার পর আমি লিখলুম বাংলা সাহিত্যের সম্পূর্ণ ইতিহাস (১৯৪০-), গোড়া (আনুমানিক দশম শতাব্দী) থেকে বিংশ শতাব্দীর মধ্যভাগ পর্যন্ত। আমার রচনার গুণাগুণ সম্বন্ধে কিছু বলা আমার শোভা পায় না। দোষত্রুটি সকলেই জানেন, গুণমূল্য কেউ-কেউ বোঝেন। আমি শুধু বলবো কি মনোভাবের এবং চিন্তাধারার বশে আমি বাংলা সাহিত্যের ইতিহাস গ্রন্থরচনায় প্রবৃত্ত এবং রত হয়েছিলুম এবং হ'য়ে আছি।

বস্তু এবং বিষয় সাহিত্য হ'লেও তার অবগতি ইতিহাস-দৃষ্টিতে। তাই সাহিত্য-ইতিহাসের ব্যাপারে ইতিহাসের প্রয়োজন ভুললে চলবে না। বিষয় স্থান এবং কাল এই তিন আয়ামের মধ্যে দিয়ে দেখতে এবং দেখাতে হবে। এইই হ'লো সাহিত্য-ইতিহাস লেখকের প্রণিধান। আমার দৃষ্টিও তাই পুরোপুরি ইতিহাসের। নিজেকে নিরপেক্ষ রাখতে প্রযত্ন করেছি, কিন্তু কোনো অঞ্চল বা গোষ্ঠীবিশেষের সম্ভাবিত অপ্রিয়ভাজনতা পরিহার করবার জগ্রে ইতিহাসকে প্রত্যাখ্যান করিনি অথবা চেপে খাইনি। আমি ভেবেছি এবং ভাবি যে আমি পরিপূর্ণ বাঙালী; কোনো নদীনালা প্রান্তর জঙ্গল দিয়ে বা অন্ত কিছু দিয়ে আমার ইতিহাসের বাংলাদেশ বিচ্ছিন্ন নয়। এককথায় আমি লোকাল্ পেট্রিঅটিজ্‌মের কোনো প্রদ্রব্য দিইনি।

ইতিহাস দুটো স্তরের উপর গড়া। এক কালক্রম (chronology), দুই বর্ণনা (narration, story)। আবিদেওগঠনে মেরুদণ্ডের মতো ইতিহাসগঠনে কালক্রম



তার দেহভিত্তি, আর অস্থি মাংস রক্ত চর্মের মতো বর্ণনা। হুতরাং কালক্রম-ভাবনা অগ্রাহ্য ক'রে ইতিহাস রচনা করা যায় না, তবে উপাদেয় আখ্যান রচনা করা যায়। (আমাদের অধিকাংশ পাঠকই এইরকম কালক্রমবর্জিত উপাদেয় ইতিহাস-উপন্যাসের খরিদদার।) আমি কালক্রমকে খুঁটিয়ে অবলম্বন করতে চেষ্টা করেছি। যেখানে পারিনি সেখানে বুঝতে হবে উপাদানের অভাব আছে। এই কারণে আমার লেখা ইতিহাসের কথায় মাঝে-মাঝে ফাঁক আছে। ইতিহাসের খাতিরেই আমি সে-ফাঁক কল্পনা অথবা অবাস্তব প্রসঙ্গ টেনে এনে বুজোতে চাইনি।

যে-কালের রচনা সে-কালের মানুষের রুচি কেমন ছিলো তা ধরতে চেষ্টা করেছি, কিন্তু এ-বিষয়ে উপাদান প্রায় নেই বললেই হয়। আমি যথাসাধ্য চেষ্টা করেছি এদিক ওদিক থেকে খুঁটিনাটি কুড়িয়ে নিয়ে একটু আধটু আভাস দিতে। যাদের জগ্রে সাহিত্য প্রসূত হয়েছিলো তাদের দৃষ্টি দিয়ে সাহিত্যকে দেখাই সাহিত্যের ইতিহাস সৃষ্টি। তবে ইতিহাস যে খণ্ড কালের সঙ্গে-সঙ্গেই লোপ পায় না, তা শেকলের মতো পূর্ববর্তী ও পরবর্তী কালের সঙ্গে জড়াজড়ি ক'রে এগিয়ে চলে, এ সত্যও সাহিত্য-ইতিহাসের লেখকের সামনে সর্বদা উন্মুক্ত থাকা চাই। সেদিকে আমি সর্বদা অবধান রেখে চলেছি।

তবে মানুষের কাজ যাত্রেই ভ্রম ও প্রমাদ কিছু-না-কিছু থাকবেই। আমার কাজেও আছে। কিন্তু সে-বিষয়ে আমি সর্বদা সতর্ক থেকেছি। নিজের ভুলকে আমি অপরের ভুলের চেয়েও নির্মমভাবে লিখেছি। আমি যা দেখেছি তাই চরম সত্য এই ধারণা আমাদের দেশের পণ্ডিতসমাজে একেবারেই বিরল নয়। তাই তাঁরা গদ্য চেষ্টা করেন প্রতিবাদকে উড়িয়ে দিতে অথবা অগ্রাহ্য ক'রে চেপে দিতে। আমি তা কখনোই করিনি। আমার নিজের ভুল আমি নিজেই ধরেছি—আর কেউ নয় - (এখানে মুদ্রণান্তিক্রির ও অনবধানতার কথা বলছি না, যদিও তা তুচ্ছ করবার নয়) এবং নিজেই স্বীকার ক'রে তা সংশোধন করেছি। তার একমাত্র কারণ আমার উদার মহত্ব নয়, আমার সত্যনিষ্ঠা। যা সত্য ব'লে বিবেচনা করবো, তা বলবো। বলা বাহুল্য এখানে সত্য বলতে absolute truth নয় (— তা কেউই জানে না—), তথ্য ও যুক্তি সহযোগে আপন্ন সত্য। এমন সত্যনিষ্ঠার জগ্রেই কোনো-কোনো পাঠক আমার সিদ্ধান্ত সম্বন্ধে বীতশ্রদ্ধ এবং আমার বই সম্বন্ধে নিঃশ্রদ্ধ। গুণি যে এঁরা চান ইউক্লিডের জ্যামিতির মতো অনড় পাঠ্যপুস্তক। আমি তা দেবো কোথা থেকে?

ইংরেজী ও ফরাসী সাহিত্যের ইতিহাস অনেক লেখা হয়েছে, অনেক কাল ধ'রে।

তার ফলে, আমি ষে-ধরনের সাহিত্য-ইতিহাস লিখতে চেষ্টা করেছি তেমন সাহিত্য-ইতিহাস ও-দুটি ভাষায় আর নতুন ক'রে লেখবার কোনো প্রয়োজন নেই (—অবশ্য বিদ্যালয়পাঠ্য গ্রন্থ ছাড়া)। তাই ও-সব দেশে অন্ত দৃষ্টিতে—প্রভুত্ব নৃত্ব সমাজ-বিজ্ঞান রাষ্ট্রচিন্তা অর্থনীতি ইত্যাদি নব্যবিজ্ঞার আলোকে—সাহিত্য-ইতিহাস রচনা করবার চেষ্টা হয়েছে। সেই ফেশান আমাদের দেশেও উঠেছে। কিন্তু মস্ত বাধা আমাদের। আমরা আমাদের সাহিত্য ভালো ক'রে জানি না, আমাদের ইতিহাস-জ্ঞান শাস্ত্র ও হিস্ট্রির খিচুড়িতে ঘোলাটে এবং ও-সব বিজ্ঞাগুলির সঙ্গে আমাদের পরিচয় ইংরেজী বইয়েরই মারফৎ। আমাদের সাহিত্য-ইতিহাস রচনায় এ-সব দাঁড়ার সার্থকতা আমি খুঁজে পাই না।

তবে এক বিষয়ে কিছু বলবার আছে। মার্ক্সবাদ ও কমিউনিজম আমাদের অনেক সাহিত্যপাঠক ও সাহিত্যকারকে প্রভাবিত ক'রে এসেছে বর্তমান শতাব্দীর তৃতীয় দশক থেকে। স্বাধীনতা লাভের পর এই বামপন্থী সাহিত্যপথিকেরা বাংলা সাহিত্যের ইতিহাসের আলোচনায় নিজেদের বিশিষ্ট চিন্তালোক নিষ্ক্ষেপ করেছেন। এঁদের সম্বন্ধে আমার বক্তব্য শুধু এই যে অতীতকালের ইতিহাস আলোচনায় মার্ক্সবাদ বা কমিউনিষ্ট প্রেরণা স্বীকার করা ভবিষ্যতের ঠিকুজিতে অতীতের কুলজী পড়ার মতোই নিরর্থ। এঁদের রচনার প্রধান দোষ, এঁদের দৃষ্টিতে যথার্থ ঐতিহাসিকের নিরাসক্ত দৃষ্টি নেই।

সাহিত্য-ইতিহাস রচনার আদর্শ কী হওয়া উচিত সে-সম্বন্ধে আমার বক্তব্য উপস্থাপিত করলুম। আশা করি যা বলতে চেয়েছি তা স্পষ্ট হয়েছে।

## MALAYALAM IN THE CONTEXT OF INDIAN LITERATURE

India is a multilingual country and we always refer to 'Indian languages' in the plural; there is no single language which can claim to be *the Indian language*. However, when we speak of the literature, we use both the singular and the plural as the context demands and no eye-brow is raised. We refer to Indian literatures in the plural meaning the literatures produced in the various Indian languages; we also refer to Indian literature in the singular when we want to think of it as one entity. As a matter of fact, for well over twenty years now the national Sahitya Akademi has been popularizing the slogan "Indian literature is one though written in many languages".

It may be worthwhile to doubt the contention of the Akademi, if only to ascertain whether there is sufficient similarity among the various literatures to warrant it. The declared policy of the Akademi is to foster and coordinate literary activities in all the Indian languages and to promote unity through them. It is quite possible that it has over-emphasized the common elements and underestimated the diverse and distinctive aspects. Nihur Ranjan Ray thinks that the contention cannot be sustained in the fullest sense.<sup>1</sup> According to him, literature is absolutely language-based, and language being a cultural phenomenon it is all but wholly conditioned by its locale and the socio-historical forces that are in operation through the ages there. If this is accepted, it can be argued that the literature of a particular language will have its specific form and style, images and symbols, nuances and associations. If on account of this French literature is distinguishable from English literature, should it not be equally true as regards any two literatures of India like Hindi and Bengali or Tamil and Malayalam. Considered from this point of view, we have in India as many Indian literatures as there are languages.

The major languages recognized in the constitution of India come under the Indo-Aryan and the Dravidian families. These languages and

others not so recognized have produced worthwhile literatures; but the multiplicity of languages has posed many problems as well, particularly in the recent times. According to Suniti Kumar Chatterji, the late doyen of linguistic studies in India, the multiplicity of languages need not necessarily be a burden on the country's all-round progress. India had in the past built up a common or pan-Indian civilization or way of life, transcending the barriers of language; and it was because of this that we were unmindful of the plurality of languages. Is it not a fact that between the various literatures there existed a spiritual link and that Sanskrit played a very significant part in establishing this link? In his foreword to the Sahitya Akademi's publication *Contemporary Indian Literature*, the late S. Radhakrishnan made this observation: "There is a unity of outlook as the writers in different languages derive their inspiration from a common source and face more or less the same kind of experience, emotional and intellectual." This unity of outlook should give our literary works a mark which can be called Indianness. Supposing we select 15 poems and 15 novels of classical stature from the various Indian languages and faithfully render them in English, will a foreign reader be able to say that they are definitely Indian, particularly in comparison with similar translations from Japanese, Chinese or Russian literatures, for example? I think the answer will be in the affirmative. That 'something' which distinguishes the Indian works from the others is their 'Indianness'.

However, it should be remembered that the common element is usually slender and the distinctive Indian flavour is not always easy to discover. The heterogeneous complex of creative expression dominates and the unity is more conceptual and inward than mechanical and outward, as has been pointed out by Krishna Kripalani.<sup>2</sup> What is readily recognizable is the many-sidedness and complexity of our civilization. Therefore when we emphasize the 'singularity' of our literature, we cannot afford to forget the 'plurality' of our languages in which literature takes birth. And this plurality poses many problems.

If Indian literature is the sum-total of all that is written in the many languages of India, is there anyone who really knows Indian literature? The writers and readers of one language know very little of what is available even in a neighbouring language, not to speak of others which are farther away. This is the problem which stands in the way of our understanding Indian literature; we must make 'literary traffic' possible so that inter-literary understanding is fostered. In the recent times, a few initial steps have been taken in this direction by the national institutions like

the Sahitya Akademi, the National Book Trust and the All India Radio.

## II

Malayalam is geographically away from the mainstream; but literary traffic depends on the movement of writers and artists. When we survey the Indian language scene, we have to first take into consideration Sanskrit which has a pre-eminent position. Apart from it we have 14 languages recognized in the constitution which may be arranged as follows on the numerical strength of the speakers (1971 census); Hindi, Telugu, Bengali, Marathi, Tamil, Urdu, Gujarati, Malayalam, Kannada, Oriya, Punjabi, Assamese, Kashmiri, Sindhi. With nearly 22 million speakers Malayalam has the eighth place.

As regards antiquity and wealth of classical literature, Tamil is first and Kannada second. The other 12 literatures have a literary history extending from 5 to 10 centuries and the position of Malayalam is somewhere in the middle. Besides as a member of the Dravidian family it has certain features which are special to the family. It also shares the Indian heritage like the other members. But is there anything which distinguishes Malayalam from the other languages?

It is well known that Tamil retains many of the archaic forms of the Dravidian family. Malayalam shares this quality along with Tamil as it contains a considerable number of obsolete forms.<sup>3</sup> Comparatively speaking Tamil is somewhat insular and not inclined to absorbing fresh ideas and forms from other literatures. Malayalam, on the other hand, has been the least insular and has always welcomed outside influences. Sanskrit had a predominant influence on it, which incidentally has resulted in a peculiar variety of literary dialect called *Manipravālam*, the like of which is not seen elsewhere. This does not stop at just borrowing a few forms; that many languages have done. Malayalam has gone several steps further. The Sanskrit forms have been so welded into Malayalam that a new structure has evolved. Thus *Manipravālam* in Malayalam is not merely an admixture of the Sanskrit and Malayalam words, but it has a distinctive role. The Sanskrit words when accepted for *Manipravālam* should be declined and conjugated exactly as in Sanskrit. This unusual kind of mixing has come to stay and there are several *Sandeśakāvya*s and *Campūs* composed in this ornate and odd literary style. We may call it a *synthetic literary dialect*. Generally speaking, this willingness to absorb and assimilate ideas, forms and modes from other languages

has been a highly significant aspect of Malayalam and I feel that in this Malayalam surpasses the rest of Indian languages.<sup>4</sup>

The balance of religious communities in Kerala is something which distinguishes it from the other regions. Here the Hindus, Christians and Muslims are all important communities having sizable populations and their existence for several centuries has contributed a composite culture which is reflected in the language and literature as well. The Hindu culture has no doubt dominated, but the Christian and Muslim strands are also quite significant.

The Indo-Aryan infiltration in the realms of literature is particularly manifest in the developed languages of the Dravidian family. The religious thoughts of the Hindus, particularly the great epics *Rāmāyaṇa* and *Mahābhārata*, have been responsible for a good deal of literary creation of the Dravidian tongues. Buddhism and Jainism also have contributed to the flowering of literature in Tamil, Kannada and Telugu, but not so much in Malayalam. This is a point to be noted.

Kerala is a land of paradoxes, at least apparently. Backward economically it is otherwise one of the better developed states. Despite the acute food scarcity, life expectancy is the highest here and infant mortality is the lowest. The percentage of literacy too is the highest here and the stock of professionals (doctors, engineers, lawyers) is three times the national average. Though population-wise it ranks eighth, readership-wise its place is second. It is no doubt a problem state; but it is also the most progressive. And that cannot be a surprise when 40% of its budget goes to education while the national average is only 4%.

The literary output in the last 50 years has been phenomenal and it can vie with Bengali and Marathi which had a better start. It is therefore not an accident that among literary works in Indian languages written during a period of 33 years, the first Jnanpith Award for the most outstanding Indian book was given to Mahakavi G. Sankara Kurup for his collection of poems, *Ottakuzhal*. In the same way, when the Malayalam film *Chemmeen* based on Thakazhi's novel of the same title got the President's Gold Medal in 1966, it was the first South Indian film to get that.

From the time of Ādi Śaṅkarācārya, Kerala has been a vital centre of the development of Indian thought and has been a meeting place of different influences, both Indian and foreign. No other region in India has witnessed such a dynamic confluence of the Dravidian and Aryan traditions; the Christian and Muslim influences have merged with this.

Perhaps this explains in part the urge for experimentation, which is so remarkable in modern Malayalam.

### III

It is difficult to assess the mutual influence of the various Indian literatures. It is manifest not only in the translations and adaptations from one language into another, but also in the inspiration from the outstanding classics of other languages. It is easier to assess the inter-literary exchanges through translations and clear-cut adaptations. As already said, there is no modern Indian literature which has not been enriched by borrowings from Sanskrit, and Malayalam in particular is considerably indebted to it. Nearly half of it had the seed in Sanskrit. The work of transplantation started as early as the 12th century with the composition of *Rāmacaritam*. The lucid and beautiful translation of the *Bhagavad-Gītā* by Niranam Madhava Panickkar reached Malayalam in the 14th century. This appears to be one of the earliest translations of the classic in any of the modern Indian languages. The whole branch of early *Maṇipravāla* literature establishes the influence of Sanskrit. Another significant translation is the prose rendering of Kauṭilya's *Arthaśāstra*. The authorship is unknown, but the date ascribed is the 15th century. Translation and adaptation of Sanskrit works had been going on down the centuries and in the second half of the 19th century, there was an extraordinary spurt which continued till the first quarter of the 20th. *Śakuntalam*, *Kumārasambhavam*, *Mālavikāgnimitram*, *Raghuvamśam*, *Meghadūtam*, *Cārudattam*, *Amaru-Śatakam*, *Anyopadeśa-Śatakam*, *Vālmiki-Rāmāyaṇam* and *Ṛgvedam* are some of the titles which have come into the language by way of translation. For several classics there are two or more translations. For *Śakuntalam* there are as many as 20 translations, and for *Meghadūtam* 10.

Compared to Sanskrit, the flow of traffic from the other languages of India has been very slender. Even from Tamil, the closest neighbour, very few works have come by way of translation. *Tirukkural* and parts of *Kambaramayanam* have been translated or adapted quite early. In the 16th century Rama Varma Kavirajan rendered *Kural* into Malayalam. (There are two more renderings which are recent.) About the same time *Paramajñanavilakkam* was also rendered into Malayalam. Scholars in Kerala were conversant with Tamil and that perhaps explains the dearth of translations from that language in the early period.

When we come to the modern period, particularly the 20th century, the literary traffic gets a momentum. The bulk of the translations is from Bengali, especially novels and short stories. In many cases the translation has been from an English version, but in due course a few Malayalees learnt Bengali and made translations directly from the original Bengali. The earliest translation was of *Durgesanandini*. Some of the important works which caused a fresh wave in Malayalam literature are:

WORK	AUTHOR	TRANSLATOR
<i>Durgesanandini</i>	Bankim Chandra	C. S. Subramoniam Potti
<i>Visha Vriksham</i>	„	T. C. Kalyani Amma
<i>Krishna Kanta's Will</i>	„	„
<i>Kapala Kundala</i>	„	V. Krishnan Tampi
<i>Talapushkarani</i>	R. C. Dutt	C. S. Subramoniam Potti
<i>Malathimala</i>		V. Unnikrishnan Nair
<i>Sarayubala</i>		R. C. Sarma

Over 20 novels of Saratchandra Chatterji and several plays of D. L. Roy have been translated into Malayalam. The short stories of Rabindranath Tagore rendered by Puthethathu Rama Menon and Kunnathu Janardanan became very popular. *Gitanjali* has been translated by three different writers. Translation of the selected works of Tagore, sponsored by the Sahitya Akademi as a part of the centenary celebrations in 1961, has been published in eight sumptuous volumes consisting of poems, plays, essays, novels and short stories.

Recently the novels of Tarashankar Bandyopadhyay have become extremely popular in Malayalam, especially *Arogyaniketan*, *Ezhuchuvadu* (Saptapadi), and *Alla* (Na). Two other works which have been well received from Bengali are Bibhutibhushan Bandyopadhyay's *Aranyaka* and Manik Bandyopadhyay's *Pavakaliyute Katha*. Other Bengali authors introduced to the Malayalam readers are Charu Chandra Bandyopadhyay, Nirupama Devi, Premendra Mitra, Bimal Mitra, Sita Devi and Debesh Das.

The inflow from Bengali has been given prominence here for more than one reason. In modern times, it is the Bengali writers like Bankim, Tagore and Saratchandra who have achieved wide recognition and thus been welcomed by many Indian languages. Besides, it is Bengali which had the first impact of Western literature and thought, and the literary products of the late 19th and early 20th century were in part foreign



seeds fertilized in the Bengali soil and thus in better assimilable form to all Indian readers.

In this context, it may be useful to ascertain the number of titles translated from the various Indian languages into Malayalam. In quite a few cases there are more than one translations, but only the original titles are taken into account in the list below:

Bengali	196	Gujarati	7
Hindi	130	Kannada	5
Tamil	46	Punjabi	4
Urdu	24	Oriya	3
Marathi	14	Telugu	2

These figures may not be quite up to date, but the increase would not be substantial. It gives an idea of the literary traffic into Malayalam from the various Indian languages, far and near. Bengali tops the list; Hindi comes next because it has been developing as a link language through the last 60 years, and translators were available. Even translations from Oriya and Punjabi had to come through Hindi. So had some Urdu titles also. The flow from the two sister languages Kannada and Telugu is disappointingly low, owing to the dearth of competent translators. Even in spite of the concerted attempt of the Sahitya Akademi and the National Book Trust, the network of 14 languages consisting of 182 connections has not yet gained the necessary strength and prominence.

Tulsidas, Prem Chand and Yaspal of Hindi, as Kishan Chandar and Iqbal of Urdu, have made an impact on the Malayalam readers. As regards the modern Tamil authors, Kalki, Akilan, Janakiraman and Jayakantan have been well received. So have the works of Khandekar and Mama Warerkar of Marathi. Though only 5 books have come from Kannada, the works, particularly the novels of Sivaram Karanth, are cherished by the Malayalam readers.

#### IV

So long with what Malayalam has received from the other Indian languages. How about the other side of the picture now? What has Malayalam given to the other languages? Before the national institutions like the Sahitya Akademi came into existence, no one had taken any serious note of Malayalam literature and it practically remained a one-way

traffic. One must acknowledge that the foundations for an effective two-way traffic were laid by the national Sahitya Akademi. This was supported by the National Book Trust, the All India Radio and the regional Akademies. But despite good intentions not much headway has been made, the main difficulty being the non-availability of translators for several language combinations. For instance, almost no translator is available between Malayalam on the one hand and Oriya, Punjabi, Gujarati or Telugu on the other. In the case of Assamese, Kannada and Urdu only one or two translators could be discovered after a great deal of search.

Here is the list of the Malayalam works translated and published in other languages by the National Sahitya Akademi. The total outflow from Malayalam through other agencies and institutions is likely to be as much.

WORK	AUTHOR	TRANSLATED INTO
<i>Rantitangazhi</i>	Thakazhi	Bengali, Hindi, Sindhi, Urdu, Punjabi, Marathi, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Oriya
<i>Chemmen</i>		Hindi, Bengali, Punjabi, Telugu, Kannada, Tamil, Assamese, Urdu
<i>Enruppappekkoranentarnu</i>	Basheer	Bengali, Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada
<i>Sundarikalum Sundaranmarum</i>	Uroob	Tamil
<i>Kerala Simham</i>	K. M. Panicker	Hindi
<i>Professor</i>	Mundassery	Hindi, Bengali, Tamil
<i>Koottukrishi</i>	Edassery	Hindi, Tamil
Selected poems of Vallathol		Hindi, Kannada, Tamil
Asan's poems		Tamil, Kannada, Hindi
Anthology of Malayalam short stories		Tamil
History of Malayalam literature		English, Hindi, Tamil, Kannada, Telugu

Direct translations from the Malayalam original may not be over 50%. Some are either from the Hindi or the English version—these two languages have been functioning as effective link-languages. Even a translation direct from the original suffers in quality, but the translation of a translation is bound to suffer more. Yet some of these works have gained considerable appreciation outside Kerala. Thakazhi tops the list. V. K. Narayana Menon's English rendering of *Chemmeen* was considerably responsible for making Thakazhi known even outside India. *Chemmeen* received the National Akademi Award and its film version the President's Gold Medal. Basheer was not that lucky, but the Bengali translation of his novel has attracted the attention of literary connoisseurs in that language. Though only a few works from Malayalam have crossed the barriers of language and script, there is sufficient reason to believe that adequate translations of select Malayalam works will have a good reception in other languages.

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- 1 *Indian Literature*, Indian Institute of Advanced Study, p.6.
  - 2 See "Concept of Indian Literature as one Literature" in *Indian Literature*, p.19.
  - 3 R. Caldwell, *A Comparative Grammar of Dravidian Languages*, p. 80.
  - 4 In my book *Western Influence on Malayalam Language and Literature*, I have traced the nature and extent of influence that foreign languages like Dutch, Portuguese, French, Russian and German had on Malayalam apart from English which was dominant in every way.

**MAHABHARATER KATHA**

—Translated by Sujit Mukherjee

**ONE : THE LAST DAY OF VANAVASA**

Twelve years of exile in the woods was about to end. The Pāṇḍavas along with Draupadī had been living in the Dvaitavana, and these were not happy years. There was misery enough in having to wander from forest to forest after losing a kingdom. The latest strain on top of this continued unhappiness was the kidnapping of Draupadī by Jayadratha. True, she had been rescued with lightning speed and the Sindhu king had been suitably chastised by Bhīma. But that it could have happened at all—that the Pāṇcāla princess could have been abducted from the custody of her five husbands—was what worried Yudhisṭhira no end. Soon after this, the Pāṇḍavas were to be challenged and be defeated in a manner that was nearly as extreme a humiliation for them as it is a startling incident for us.

One day a deer ran away with the *arani*-wood of a brahman. Could any feat be easier for the Pāṇḍavas than to apprehend the deer and retrieve the fire-producing pieces of wood? Any one of them could have accomplished it—perhaps even either of Nakula or Sahadeva. But all five of them set out on this mission and, what is astonishing, in spite of their varied weaponry they could not shoot this quite harmless herb-eating creature, the kind they ate everyday. At this point we are reminded, however vaguely, of the *Rāmāyaṇa* episode involving the magic deer. There Rāma did finally kill that creature, though with grievous consequences. Here the episode is less weighty but somewhat mysterious. The thieving deer did not reveal itself as a rākṣasa in disguise but eluded the pursuing hunters, each a famed warrior, and disappeared into the woods ahead of them. Thirsty as well as hungry, the tired Pāṇḍavas sought rest under the shade of a banyan tree.

We remember that the aptly named Bhima had already offered numerous proofs of his physical prowess. The overpowering of Hiḍimbā and Vaka-rākṣasa in Ādi-parvan, the killing of the yakṣas in Kuvera's realm during the fifth year of vanavāsa, are some of the outstanding examples. As for Arjuna, beloved of the gods, he had over the years collected weapons many of which were endowed with supernatural powers and thus irresistible. Of course, both of them had tasted defeat at least once each earlier. Readers will recall that Arjuna had not been able to contend with a forest hunter and had fainted away, while Bhīma had been overpowered by a giant python. But the hunter was boon-bestowing Śiva himself while the giant snake was the curse-stricken Nahuṣa, an ancestor of the Pāṇḍavas. To be vanquished by the gods or the godlike meant considerable glory for those vanquished inasmuch as they had been considered worthy of contest by superior beings. But to be outwitted by a deer, to fail to retrieve a mere arani-wood—this seems an unusually mortifying experience in the light of the previous career of the Pāṇḍavas. That they should feel worn out by thirst and hunger also makes us feel uneasy; it seems as if these five brothers, each fathered by a god, have suddenly been deprived of their superior powers and brought down to the level of ordinary existence.

We shall, of course, learn in a little while that their frustration has been caused by a divine being who employs neither force nor weaponry. The source of his power lies elsewhere.

The brothers commiserated with one another as they rested under the banyan tree, then their thirst grew to such a measure that it had to be relieved. Nakula climbed up the tree, espied a pond some distance away, and was asked by Yudhiṣṭhira to fetch water. Some time passed, more time than was reasonable, but Nakula did not return. What happened thereafter need not be recounted in detail for the benefit of readers. One after another, Sahadeva, Arjuna, Bhīma, all went to fetch water, a job more fit for women, but nobody returned. At last the much worried Yudhiṣṭhira went to look for his brothers. He found them lying lifeless on the ground\* at the edge of a beautiful and inviting lake. After expressing his grief in appropriate words and at suitable length, Yudhiṣṭhira was about to step into the water to slake his thirst when a commanding voice spoke in mid-air:

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\*In the original text, the author has used here a line from Kaliprasanna Singha's Bengali version of the *Mahābhārata*.

I am a crane, eater of fish and water-weeds. I have despatched your younger brothers to the realm of disembodied spirits. Prince, you shall become the fifth and follow them if you do not answer my questions.

Son of Kunti, do not venture into the lake which I have pre-occupied. Answer my questions before you make any use of this water.

(Vana : 312)

This solemn warning caused fear in Yudhiṣṭhira's heart, but his mind was filled with sublime curiosity as well. These two feelings seized Yudhiṣṭhira simultaneously, even giving him a headache. But he managed to acknowledge the imperative voice respectfully and asked, "Lord, who are you?" The reply was, "Well-born one, I am not a water-bird.<sup>1</sup> I have put to death your impetuous brothers... because they ignored my warning and sought to drink this water. ...Son of Pṛthā, if you wish to secure your life, answer the question I ask before you use this water."

Yudhiṣṭhira agreed and stepped back from the water's edge. He won back the lives of his brothers by answering all thirtyfour<sup>2</sup> questions asked by the subtle Yakṣa, and incidentally earned a few boons as well. After this episode, there is only one small chapter in the Vana-parvan, following which we find the Pāṇḍavas preparing for the year of living incognito. That is, the question and answer session between father and son took place on the final or on the penultimate day of the period of forest sojourn.<sup>3</sup>

A deeper scrutiny of this episode will uncover one of the basic issues in the *Mahābhārata*.

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### Notes

[Notes relating only to the Bengali texts have been omitted.]

- 1 The Yakṣa introduces himself as "I am a crane, eater of fish and water-weeds" and Yudhiṣṭhira too while answering the questions, addresses him once as "water-walker" and another time as "one who is standing on one leg". But the form in which he is seen by Yudhiṣṭhira—and, thus, by us—is the awe-inspiring Yakṣa form, described in these words by Kaliprasanna; "endowed with eyes beyond the measure of beauty, vast in stature, high as the palm, bright as the sun's fire, like a mountain". But we have no description of the crane-guise of Dharma. The questioner is invariably mentioned as the Yakṣa, never as the crane. Yet from the way the dialogue proceeds, we can infer that after the initial appearance in the gigantic yakṣa-form perhaps to strike terror in his son's heart—Dharma

remained in the form of a crane both while asking questions and while listening to the answers. Even after he announces himself as Dharma there is no change of outward form—at least there is no such indication in the text.

Does the Bengali phrase 'crane-pious' [*vaka-dharmik*, meaning a hypocrite] have its origin in this episode? I do not know, but I feel there is some connection. Perhaps the *dharma-vaka* of the Vana-parvan got adopted as *vaka-dharmik* in Prakrit and came to mean the opposite, as has been known to happen in a living language. Yet Monier-Williams' dictionary associates the meaning 'dishonesty' with terms like *vaka-vṛtti* and *vaka-vrata*, so the connotation may not be very recent. I should like to suggest that the sight of the crane standing still by the waterside inspired the pious poet to find correspondence with the image of a meditating presence, but worldly onlookers cannot forget that the crane's real object of meditation is tasty fish.

- 2 Actually there are many more questions. Only verses 7, 29, 30 and 31 carry a single question each. Other verses contain two to five questions, most verses contain four. From the Kaliprasanna version I counted 126 altogether. (This tally agrees with the Aryasastra and the Bangavasi versions, but in the Siddhanta-vagish version there are 23 question-bearing slokas and the questions total 87.)
- 3 There need not be any doubt, since Yudhiṣṭhira clearly informs the Yakṣa: 'Varsāni dvādaśāranye trayodaśamupasthitam'. At the close of Vana-parvan and once again at the beginning of Virāṭa-parvan, we are told that the time of incognito living is near.

## T W O : 'A BOUNDLESS FOREST'

The Mahābhārata in its present form is a composition from widely separated periods in the history of Old Indian literature, and its elements are derived from various parts of the Old Indian land. It was not written by one man, but it is the work contributed by many hands. It is a growth: one piece from here, another from there; one from this time, another from that. Like an Indian jungle it spreads out before us in an endless wilderness of trees entwined and tangled with rank creepers, coloured and scented with manifold flowers and blossoms, and the home of every kind of living creature. Bewitching bird-song, the terrifying cries of wild beasts fall on our ears; the poisonous snake winds its coils beside the mild dove; the robber dwells therein, free, indeed, from the law, but often the slave of superstitions beyond belief; and so the self-denying thinker with his eyes set above the earth,

and his thoughts reaching into the depths of the world and of his soul. There lie the roots of a glowing, unbounded wealth of life, of a will strong beyond any other power; and by their side are found the depths of dreaming, the heavy dead sleep of many thousand years, so that we should ourselves sink into it, too, were it not for the swarms of stinging flies. And so we could long go on, setting wonder against wonder, but hardly ever reaching an end to it all!<sup>1</sup>

There should be no difficulty in our concurring with these observations of a German scholar. Sometime or another we have ourselves lost our way in this 'boundless forest' and looked in vain for some dim, meandering footpath. At those moments we cannot remember what place we are in, in what time, whether we are in an earthly or in an unearthly situation. Excessively fertile, disjointed, repetitive, indiscriminating, frighteningly large—these are the primary and most conspicuous characteristics of the *Mahābhārata*. Among Bengali intellectuals, the one who reacted most sharply against these features and articulated his reaction most strongly, was the author of *Krishna-charitra*, Bankimchandra. As for western scholars, even among those who have granted total or partial greatness to the work, their exasperation about the over-elaboration of the poem is illustrated by the "stinging flies" referred to above. There is no lack of mild or harsh rebuke directed against the poem, but I should like to move quickly to what I have to say. Before doing that, let me quote a verse statement which sums up the basic response of the entire western world. It was made by Friedrich Rückert, nineteenth century Indophil poet of Germany, translator and promoter of Sanskrit literature. He composed a poem about his reaction to the *Rāmāyaṇa*, and I present here a prose paraphrase of the relevant lines:

Homer taught you to ignore those unnatural and unseemly grimaces and that unnecessary verbiage to be found in the *Rāmāyaṇa*, but such profound feelings and elevated thoughts are not available in the *Iliad*.

Such an observation would apply even more aptly to the *Mahābhārata*.

European scholars have been trying for the last one hundred and fifty years to purge and refine the *Mahābhārata*, and their efforts



have yet to abate. Their industrious research has established that the *Mahābhārata* (also the *Rāmāyaṇa*) was originally a battle tale composed by bards; that it was much shorter in length and much better organized in the presentation of events. Through centuries thereafter many portions got interpolated, especially by the brahmins who—in order to uphold their caste and their ways of fulfilling their *dharma*—carried out extensive emendation, which has widely distorted the original or damaged its structure or simply concealed it under fabrication. It has never been denied that the “superior thoughts” referred to by Rückert were contributed by the brahmins. But the true ksatriyas of our time, the North Europeans, have not been able to approve of such brahmanization of the text. This is one of the main reasons why they are eager to remove the upper layers and recover the primarily *ksatra* poem. There is bound to be dispute about which portions are interpolations and which are not, but there is a fairly large measure of agreement among scholars that a great deal of the *Mahābhārata* belongs to the realm of later additions. Bankimchandra, too, refers repeatedly to the original, the second and the third stages of the *Mahābhārata* in his endeavour to portray the character of Kṛṣṇa as the ideal man. Wherever the elusive Kṛṣṇa does not get reflected in the way Bankimchandra wants Kṛṣṇa to be reflected, he gets round the problem by declaring the portion to be an interpolation—in much too facile, sometimes wholly unacceptable, a manner.

I do not want to discuss the stages through which the text has passed, and I do not think it will ever be possible to establish this. In fact, I should like to suggest that rather than only three stages there may have been eight or ten, but we should not vainly aspire to be able to arrive at any right and firm conclusion on this issue. Common sense tells us that the present composition is the accumulated labour of many poets who differed widely in their powers of composition, who owed allegiance to different divinities, whose thought and perception were at variance with each others’, and whose lifetimes ranged over many centuries. Nothing else will explain why the sublime and the trivial cohabit the text like members of a vast joint family, why we are cast time and again from superb peaks of poetry down to smoky nether regions, why the ‘go-brahmana-stuti’ should be repeated intolerably in the Anuśāsana-parvan, why Kṛṣṇa himself should in the last two cantos of Sauptika-parvan propagate the greatness of Śiva,

and Śiva reciprocate by singing the praises of Viṣṇu in verse 147 of Anuśāsana-parvan. As if this were not enough, we have the non-Arya Paśupati-Śiva, lord of all animals, sunk in worshipful meditation on the cow (Anu., 133); even the thrilling Yama-Naciketas dialogue of the Kaṭhupanishad is used to preach the virtues of gifting away cows (Anu., 71)! Even a bird's-eye view at this text will reveal inconsistencies and irregularities that need no proving by research scholars. Or it may be that only research workers are in need of such proofs. We who read for enjoyment do not feel such need. I have no difficulty in accepting what Rabindranath had to say about the origin of the *Mahābhārata*<sup>2</sup>. It is easy to believe that a time must have come following the rise and decline of Buddhism when the Hindus of India became conscious of the need to preserve their long and chequered history and tradition - not trust any longer to memory, but preserve the record at one place and in writing. Starting from that need and centred in a dimly remembered historical moment, through age after age of composing, of structuring or editing, grew a text to which the ancients gave the name "Bhārata-saṃhitā". Here the term 'Bhārata' signifies the dynasty of Bharata as well as the geographic entity Bhāratavarṣa; and 'saṃhitā' surely means compilation. Out of their preoccupation with self-preservation, the brahmans amassed an all-encompassing, indiscriminating storehouse which has caused so much difficulty and confusion to analytical modern minds.

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#### Notes

1. Johann Jakob Meyer, *Sexual Life in Ancient India* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1952), p.1. (There is no mention of the English translator in this volume.)
2. "Bharatvarshey Itihaser Dhara" ("The Trends of History in India") in *Parichay*. Those who are interested in the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata* should read this essay in its entirety. Rabindranath has argued that the Hindus could not but have sought to re-unite a society shattered into many pieces by the Buddhist revolt. His dating of the work as post-Buddhist may also be defended because there are numerous indirect references and a few direct ones to Jainism and Buddhism in the *Mahābhārata*. We cannot, of course, jump to the conclusion from such evidence that none of the major sections of the present text pre-dates the Buddhist era.

## T H R E E : THE QUESTION OF PEDIGREE

A conspicuous difficulty about the *Mahābhārata* is that it irresistibly transgresses the limits and definition of what we recognize today as literature—or the ancients did. In the fortysix couplets of the prefatory canto of Ādi-parvan, this saga of India has been awarded various identities. Sauti and other ṛṣis listening in called it *itihāsa* [an account of tradition]; Vyasa named it *kāvya* [literary composition] and Brahmā himself approved of this naming; later it is called the *purāṇa*-like full moon radiating *śruti*-like moonlight—here the term ‘śruti’ obviously means Vedānta. Each of these appellations is valid, yet no one of them is wholly applicable to this great book. According to the European reckoning, it (or its original form) is among the few primary epics of mankind. Yet, the measure by which we test other primary epics like the *Iliad* or the *Odyssey*—even our own *Rāmāyaṇa*—such a measure would crumble the moment it touched the *Mahābhārata*. Dion Chrisostom, a first century A.D. Greek poet resident in Rome, knew of a Hindu *kāvya* which had been ‘purloined from or modelled on’ Homer. Though this *kāvya* has never been precisely identified, common sense suggests that it is the *Rāmāyaṇa*. Western scholarship continues to indulge occasionally in comparative discussion of the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Iliad*, on the grounds of some shallow and partial similarity of their storylines. But the *Mahābhārata* dwells in an incomparable isolation amid world literature of all time. I do not use the term ‘incomparable’ as an adjective of admiration. I want to stress that in comparison with other epics—whether they are primary epics like the *Iliad* or literary epics like the *Aeneid*—the *Mahābhārata* is utterly different in its purpose, wholly unique in its technique or lack of technique. The *Rāmāyaṇa* can justifiably be regarded as a *kāvya* according to the Sanskrit literary terminology, and has many times been regarded so. It is the prime source of the over-ornamental *kāvya*-mode that evolved afterwards. But to apply the same term *kāvya* to the *Mahābhārata* is to extend the connotation of the term beyond the bounds of reason. Which is not to say that the *Mahābhārata* is wanting in superior *kāvya* qualities—at places the poetic excellence shines inextinguishably like a star. But at many other places there is not the slightest effort of composing in *rasa*-imbued language, no pains taken to obey the smallest demands of rhythmic structure.

Some lines are dissociated from the sloka form and stand by themselves; three-line verses appear in the place of couplets. Much of the third canto of the Ādi-parvan has been composed in quite pedestrian prose, betraying that the author had no other purpose than that of a journalistic recording of facts. Canto 342 of the Śanti-parvan has only its preface in verse, the rest is in prose. Following Sauti, traditional critics have designated the *Mahābhārata* as *itihāsa*, but in the Sanskrit language *itihāsa* does not mean history—it is nearer *kimvādanti*, 'thus it was, this is what has happened' [so it has been said]<sup>1</sup>. It goes without saying that the *Mahābhārata* is not history in any modern sense (nor even in the sense understood by the gullible Herodotus). It is a vast and dim quarry of history in which fact and fiction are inextricably mingled, in which remote and more remote memories have been coloured and transformed by imagination.

In its entirety, the *Mahābhārata* has not earned and cannot earn the prestige that the Bhagavad-Gītā, one of its components, has earned as a religious text. On the other hand, it cannot be regarded as a 'romantic' (in the European sense) cycle of tales like the *Kathāsaritsāgara*, which is comparable in size, because a current of didacticism flows intermittently amid the tales of the *Mahābhārata*. But this didactic predilection is not as clear and consistent as in the *Pañcatantra*, hence we cannot regard the *Mahābhārata* as a work of ethical philosophy. Yet it contains all—fables like those of the *Pañcatantra* in the Śanti-parvan; a story about a young-old enchantress (Anuśāsana, 19-21) which is thrillingly 'romantic' in parts; there is European ballad-like battle-tale in Bidulā's story (Udyoga, 131-134); and there is no lack of high moral thought even outside the Gītā. The slaying of Jarāsandha, the clash between Vaśiṣṭha and Viśvāmitra, the rivalry between Droṇa and Drupad—in all these episodes we are made aware of their subterranean historical origins. The nature of synthesis that Rabindranath had once awarded to the term *sāhitya* while analysing it<sup>2</sup>, could well be claimed on behalf of the *Mahābhārata* and the title of literature bestowed foremost upon it. But it cannot be regarded as a specific book or a literary compilation—rather, we may look upon it as a gigantic encyclopaedia.

Encyclopaedia may well be the fittest description of this work. Contained within it is all the knowledge and wisdom available in India of its time; all the thought and speculation; all moral and ethical re-

flection; all custom and hearsay; all code and regulation; all fable and legend; all awareness of beauty and pleasure; all earthly desire, all spiritual aspiration; all moonlight and sunshine; all conflict, doubt, and possible resolution. Yes, all superstition as well, because on uprooting any superstition the essential truth within it gets lost. Also there is dread and nightmare and dark folly, because these are real elements of life, our human heritage. All this is there, but the work does not resemble anything like what we call an encyclopaedia today wherein factual information about the world is recorded objectively and the alphabetical arrangement of entries makes it possible for us to find what we want. We do however find sheer information in many parts of the *Mahābhārata*—for example, Sañjaya's account of the universe (Bhīṣma, 6-9), Mārkaṇḍeya's account of creation (Vana, 188), Viṣṇu's one thousand names and the one thousand and eight names of Śiva (Anuśāsana, 149, 17). The pilgrimage prospectus in Vana-parva (82-85) is presented in the manner of modern travel guides. Even the counsel offered by Bhīṣma occasionally takes on a professorial air in dealing only with philosophical matters—note especially his exposition of kingly dharma (Śānti, 56-58). In fact, the literally instructive portions are numerous. But in many places, perhaps in most places, the facts and the principles are imbedded in the narrative. These are not uniformly potent, but there are countless instances of where the heart of the narrative radiates—energetically, symbolically, in a manner such as to stimulate our imaginative powers—images, one after another, like cloud-refracted rays of the sun. These images, fertile as gestating wombs and full of endless mysteries, are what are called myths by Europeans but have been named, with more meaningful farsight, as *purāṇas*<sup>3</sup> by Hindus—elements that are primordial as well as eternal, indefinitely old as well as infinitely new. This is the main reason why Indians, educated as well as illiterate, have through centuries down to this day been fascinated by the *Mahābhārata*. On the one hand, the wealth of puranic glory; on the other an inflexible moral code, tirelessly discriminating between goodness and lapse from goodness—when we balance one side against the other, the *Mahābhārata* is revealed in a new perspective. We shall see that whatever gets etched on our mind starting with Homer and Hesiod, through the Athenian playwrights, down to Dante via Ovid and Virgil, is but a parallel configuration of what the *Mahābhārata* has to offer<sup>4</sup>. Its

being parallel does not mean that it belongs to the same development of thought or culture. We are all aware of the difference between the European sensibility and the Indian. I am prepared to concede that on artistic grounds the *Mahābhārata* cannot stand comparison with Sophocles' drama or Dante's poetry—indeed, it would be foolish to regard this compilation as a work of art and thus comparable to other works of art. The *Mahābhārata* is no work of art but is certainly an inexhaustible source for the material of art, larger and richer by far than the mythology of Greece and Rome. That is, what ancient European literature contains by way of matter and sagacity and imaginative illumination scattered in a large number of literary works, the genius of India has recorded the same matter in its own way, arrogantly—or perhaps because there was no alternative—in one single compilation under one single title.

For this reason I cannot get impatient with the *Mahābhārata* in spite of its innumerable lapses. I have begun to feel that it is irrelevant to try evaluating the *Mahābhārata* on aesthetic grounds. None of us has the right to extract from it only those portions that appeal to us and pre-occupy ourselves only with those portions. Should such a right be granted, it would mean much loss to ourselves. When we deal with a work like *Meghadūta* it is permissible to adjudge an inferior śloka as an interpolation, that is, as written by another hand. But when we do this with a work in which numerous hands have composed anonymously but legibly through the ages, we are merely proposing that the *Mahābhārata* would have been a 'better book' if it were not so long. Those interpolations that have been grafted on pertinently—and even those that have appeared without occasion—are really born of amplification and amalgamation. If they seem to us unbeautiful or unnecessary, we cannot just wish them away. As for inconsistency—all those glaring contradictions that have been condemned by critics of every land and which caused so much sorrow to Bankimchandra—their prevalence has been occasioned by such natural and time-honoured conditions that the very term inconsistency may be irrelevant in this context. Even the genius of Greece, celebrated for its sense of proportion, has not produced ancient literary works devoid of inconsistencies. Take the twelve feats of Heracles, for example; we have more than one account of how each was accomplished. Then, we get confused about who was Odysseus' father when,

after hearing Homer call him the son of Laertes king of Ithaca, we find Euripides saying that he was the son of cunning Sisyphus who had been condemned to eternal toil in hell. Even about Zeus the king of gods there is difference of opinion as to whether he is the eldest or the youngest son of Kronos. And Agamemnon's daughter Elektra, that unforgettable murderous virgin of Aeschylus—the etymological meaning of whose name is 'unmarried'—we find that Euripides has married her off, at one place to a poor peasant, at another to Orestes' dear friend Pylades. Inevitably, in this connection, we remember another daughter of Agamemnon, the tearful maiden Iphigenia, whom he killed with his own hands as sacrifice on the Aulis beach. Even this critical episode is not firmly established, because another story-teller has rescued her the moment before Agamemnon's dagger descended by getting the goddess Artemis to pick her up and fly away with her to a far country. Helen herself, fathered by Zeus, wedded to Menelaus, beloved of Paris—she whose face caused the destruction of Troy—it has been said of her that she did not deviate from her chaste career because the woman who eloped with Paris was only a phantom presence.<sup>5</sup> It is not really necessary to catalogue the lapses in an epic in order to demonstrate its inconsistency. The very nature of epic literature is that it nurtures the same seed, across centuries and over wide geographic spaces, to germinate different flowers as well as various fruits. The fact of the matter is that in an unprecedented volume like the *Mahābhārata*, wherein the entire lore of India is contained—from Indra, Varuṇa, Agni of remote Vedic times to the presentation of much younger awe-inspirers like Durgā and Kālikā (Virāt, 6; Bhīṣma, 23)—the very magnitude of inconsistencies and their unabashed presence provide the essential experience of its richness. Thus, was the battle fought between the Kurus and the Pāṇcālas or between the Kurus and the Pāṇḍavas? Did Kṛṣṇa have two or four or eight wives or did they number sixteen hundred and eight? Why did the Pāṇḍavas who defeated the enemy so easily in Virāt-parvan have later to struggle so hard for eighteen days? Or why has the story of King Śivi been retold three times in three different ways? (Vana, 131 and 136; Anuśāsana, 32)? In one of these versions, why is the person offering his own flesh not Śivi but his father Uśinara? If we were to get diverted and absorbed with such questions, we would lose sight of the true nature of the *Mahābhārata*. Our view of this work will depend really upon what

each of us are looking for in it, with what expectation and desire we have travelled into it. If we are looking for trivial or even substantial facts of history—or if we have set out with an axe to turn a jungle into a garden—then dissection and dismemberment must be our mode of approach. But if we wish to earn merit by laving ourselves in the huge, pulsating, holy tide of the purāṇas—and if we want to grasp even momentarily the transcendental import of many beautiful, strange and marvellous images which from time to time flit in and out of its depths—then we shall have to accept as fit and proper all that may strike us as incongruous or erratic or misleading. We shall have to accept that this work of eighteen books which we have known for a long time, the authorship of which we have always attributed to Vyāsa, is indeed the definitive *Mahābhārata* of popular acclaim. And we must not forget that every fundamental thought that has sprung from India's soil is to be found reflected in the *Mahābhārata* and *Mahābhārata* alone, nor must we forget that this is not a religious text confined to a cave-dwelling coterie. The brahmans permitted every pious person, even among the śūdras and women, to receive what the text has to offer. To comprehend the true nature of this so-called fifth Veda, we must not view it partially.

### Notes

- 1 The words in parenthesis have been added by me. I find the justification for this in the text itself. In the Śānti and Anuśāsana-parvan, in answer to Yudhiṣṭhira's queries Bhīṣma has often cited "earlier history" some of which he claims to have been told by one sage or another. Further, in the prefatory section of the Ādi-parvan, as soon as the text begins we are told that the entire Bhārata-saṃhitā is 'heard' material.
- 2 "The word *sahitya* [literature] is derived from *sahita* [together]. Hence the etymological sense of *sahitya* suggests a coming together, a union. This union is not only of thought with thought, language with language, book with book, it is also the union of man with man, past with present, near with far. Such a coming together is possible on intimate terms only in *sahitya*"—see "Bangla Jatiya Sahitya" (National Literature in Bengali) in *Sahitya*.
- 3 [The original note explains the term *purāṇa* by definition, illustration, then by citation of meaningful usage. Thus: 'Ajo nityaḥ śāsvatoḥayam purāṇo' (Kaṭho-paniṣad, 1:2:18; Gītā, 2:20); 'Punaḥ punarjāyamānā purāṇī'; 'Itihāsapurāṇ-ūbhyāṃ vedoḥ samūpavṛttihyeṣu/Vibhetyalpa-śrutād vedo māmayaṃ prahariṣyati' (*Mahābhārata*, Ādi-parvan, 1:269).



The author concludes that itihāsa and purāṇa are to be treated as supplements to the Vedas or their popular adjuncts. In this sense, regarding the *Mahābhārata* as the fifth Veda seems acceptable.]

- 4 Am I making too tall a claim? Should I have confined myself to the olden times? Yet European civilization before Christ hardly experienced religion in the way we did and do, hence I thought it necessary to draw my line of descent down to the first Jesus-devoted poet of Europe.
- 5 The source of this version is the legend about Stesichoros, a writer of 6th-7th century B.C. Greece, who is said to have been struck blind when he spoke ill of husband-abandoning Helen in a poem. Later he retracted his condemnation of Helen and wrote that she never went to Troy but to Egypt where she had waited ten years for her husband's return. As a reward for such retraction, Stesichoros got back his eyesight.  
Euripides wrote his play *Helen* on the basis of this legend.
- 6 [In this note the author has discussed the first full-length Bengali translation in prose of the *Mahābhārata* done by Kaliprasanna Sinha. In his opinion, in spite of some inaccuracies and bowdlerization, the Kaliprasanna translation is the most reliable as well as the most readable version.]

#### FOUR : THE ORIGINAL STORY

It may be asking too much of the lay reader of today to wade through the entire length of an unabridged *Mahābhārata*. Not to speak of the original Sanskrit text, even the three thousand pages of Kaliprasanna scares away most Bengali readers. They may think that for such a vast meal they need the appetite of a Bhīma and the digestion of an Agastya. They might, on some impulse, begin reading the text casually. But there is no guarantee that, unable to bear the strain of this enormous reading, they will not give up before long. This possibility is entirely natural. Therefore I would not like to propose unreasonably that every word of the text has to be read in order to get to know the *Mahābhārata*. I quite agree with those who feel that it lends itself excellently to abridgement and I can see that there is no other alternative in these hurried days. Like many grateful and delighted Bengali readers I can confirm that Rajsekhar Basu's condensed version has retained the flavour of the original and also conveyed its many-limbed profusion. It is mainly because of Rajsekhar that the Bengali reader knows that the difference between Vyāsa and Kasiram Das

(as between Vālmiki and Krittibas)\* is not only of time but also of temperament. But there is no getting away from the fact that an abridgement, no matter how satisfactory, cannot also be comprehensive. We cannot but wonder all the time whether the portions that have been left out were equally dispensable to us. Even granting the rushed nature of modern living, it has to be accepted that our response to the *Mahābhārata* will remain feeble unless we have some idea of the whole of it—each in his own ability, at his own leisure—that we shall benefit in direct proportion to the extent of our intimacy with the whole. I use the term ‘benefit’ not in any specialized sense but in a purely humanist sense, in a sense related to living. And when I say ‘we’ I do not mean only a community of sophisticated intellectuals—I also include the so-called common reader, the wage-earning man, the cinema-going woman, the businessman engaged in money-making, everybody. We may not feel greatly interested in the discoveries that are being made continually in the *Mahābhārata* by scholars in history and archaeology, anthropology and sociology. But all of us are interested in that which captures our heart and fills our mind’s eye with images, that which pleases whenever we think about it again. There are innumerable such gems of the imagination scattered all over the *Mahābhārata* and concealed precisely in those places where we might be receiving incidental instruction—none of these benefits will be available if we confine ourselves only to abridged versions of the text. Then there are portions we skip over because they are much too familiar—the Savitri episode or the story of Damayanti—the inner meanings and implications of these portions will never become apparent to us unless we read them in their original and complete form, and realize their connection to the rest of the *Mahābhārata*.

Take for example the creation story (Vana, 188) already referred to. Rajsekhar Basu has disposed of it in a few lines and he could not have done otherwise given his scheme. But when we traverse its detailed extent we realize, with some surprise, that far from being merely a lecture inflicted upon us by the sage Mārkaṇḍeya, it is directly related to what has gone before. Immediately preceding it we hear of a character like Noah of the Jewish purāṇas, Vaivaswat-Manu, who, with the assistance of a mountainous horned fish, managed to

[\*Krittibas (Djhu Mukhati, 15th century poet, adapted the *Rāmāyaṇa* into Bengali. Kusiram Das, 17th century poet, adapted the *Mahābhārata* into Bengali.)]

remain afloat during a *pralay* flood, carrying with him the seeds of all living creatures. As preamble to this narration, in order to explain the nature of *pralay*, Mārkaṇḍeya tells the story of creation. At the end of this eloquent narration, but as a supplement to it, he tells another tale which is another version of the Manu-fish episode—not a reiteration of it but a new story altogether. A gist of the second story is as follows: the immortal Mārkaṇḍeya had, during a *pralay* intermission, when he entered the belly of the boy Viṣṇu, beheld the entire universe there and not found the limits of this universe even after a hundred years of travel.<sup>1</sup> Two pre-purāṇic tales on either side and the wisdom-offering homily in the middle—these three elements relate to one another irrefutably and not without some sense of the theatrical. Seen in such a light, the creation-story no longer sounds irrelevant or uninteresting. Indeed, its contiguity adds to the impact of the two adjoining pieces. At such places we are bound to realize that the *Mahābhārata* is not really as erratic as it may appear. What appears disjointed at first acquaintance turns out in most cases to bear sufficient aptness.

By analysing its outward structure—what may be called the plot or the framework—we shall find the unity of the *Mahābhārata* not only in the smaller parts but in the entire work. The question may be asked, how do we locate the fundamental framework? My answer to this question will, I hope, emerge in the course of discussion. Let me say only this here: first, the original story is not just a war-ballad and it is impossible to conceive of the *Mahābhārata* as the Hindu version of some bloody *Nibelungenlied*. If the Kuru-Pāṇḍava feud were the heart of the matter, then all that we need to do in order to arrive at the pure and unadulterated *Mahābhārata* is to summarize the end of Ādi-parva, add to it the summaries of Sabhā-parva and Udyoga-parva, add further the summaries of five successive parvas from the Bhīṣma (omitting the Gītā) to the Sauptika. The rest would be unnecessary for our purpose. But had the *Mahābhārata* ever been edited in this manner, I am quite confident that this saga of India would have thereafter passed out of the daily life of Indians and slept comfortably in some library, to be woken up now and then by fair-skinned as well as dark-skinned scholars.

Alternately, if we were to regard the work as a chronicle of the Bharat dynasty, then we would have to hack off the Vana and Mausala

parvas immediately—thus doing rude violence to the very essence of the *Mahābhārata*. It is quite clear to me that the original story is linked inseparably and logically to every parva. Even the seeming wilderness of Śānti and Anuśāsana parvas are no exception. When I study the original story from beginning to end with some care, I see a great conception unfolding before me which may be unclear but is unmistakably there. It is impelled by a steadfast purpose which may be frustrated at times but is ceaselessly creative. Among the many wonders of the *Mahābhārata* is this: how this supreme story or plan steadily proceeds—irresistible, unforgetful—dragging a body covered by insects and leaves across a huge confusing forest, through thorny bushes and dense creepers, over a vast obstacle-bestrewn distance, towards an inevitable and unforgettable resolution, and concludes with a *maṇḍala*-like completeness. This is where the essential unity of the work is to be found. This is how, in spite of its predilection for addition and compilation, it has grown successfully into a book.

No unity, however, is possible without a focal point or a centering device. I am quite certain that Vyāsa chose as the point or device a particular character, from whom all else in the work radiates out in every direction. That is, I sense the presence of a very definite hero or protagonist in the *Mahābhārata*. He is not Arjuna, winner of many contests, beloved of many women, widely known and celebrated. Nor is he the superhuman Vāsudeva of many-faceted talent and accomplishment. He is a shy, quiet, mild and indecisive person—Yudhiṣṭira.

To support my assertion, I must return to the already mentioned Dharma in the disguise of a crane.

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*Note*

1. I have read another and even more startling version derived from the *Matsya-purāṇa* in Heinrich Zimmer's *Myths and Symbols in Indian Art and Civilization*. But the special importance of the version that appears in the *Mahābhārata* is that it is an anticipation of what happens in the Gītā. Long before Arjuna was fortunate enough to be granted the vision, Mārkaṇḍeya had been favoured with *viśva-rūpa-darśana*.

## UNITY AND STRUCTURE IN A *GHAZAL* OF ḤĀFĪZ A COMPARATIVE STUDY

The *ghazal*, the most important Persian lyric genre, reached its peak in the fourteenth century with the poet Ḥāfīz, whose poems combine mastery of the genre's complex conventions with an innovative and personal style unparalleled in his day. Both because of his immense appeal as a poet, and because in his *ghazals* the various features of the genre are exploited and developed to their fullest extent, Ḥāfīz has long been the subject of extensive study by both native and Western critics. By the latter, his *ghazal* has been regarded chiefly as part of a tradition scarcely comprehensible to the Western reader, because essentially different from the Western poetic tradition; thus the important similarities which exist between Persian and Western lyric poetry have too often been obscured by a haze of metaphysical arguments on the 'essence' of Persian poetry.

Emphasis on the differences between Persian and Western poetry, and discussions of "the specific nature of Persian poetry—that which distinguishes it essentially from any other"<sup>1</sup>—have too long held the field; and the example of Ḥāfīz, in particular, has been cited to illustrate the uniqueness of the Persian lyric. A new approach is, therefore, needed to place Ḥāfīz, and the Persian *ghazal*, in their proper perspective with relation to world literature. The comparative approach—which searches for the factors which link national literatures together into 'literature', as well as for those which give to national literatures their particular characteristics—can provide a method through which the many resemblances between Ḥāfīz's poetry and the Western lyric can be apprehended and appreciated—resemblances which arise from the fundamental fact that literature as a whole is itself a system, a universal and unified phenomenon possessing certain universally shared features.

Limitations of space obviously prohibit discussion of the numerous and varied techniques of lyric poetry; therefore, I have chosen to confine the present study to a comparison of one of Hāfiz's *ghazals* with a sonnet—the European genre which, for a variety of reasons, most closely resembles the *ghazal*.<sup>2</sup> The poems to be compared were chosen because they possess a number of similar thematic and structural features; but the aspect to which I wish to devote most attention is that of the role of structural elements in creating poetic unity.

The much-vexed question of poetic unity is a central problem in the study of the Persian lyric. It has often been stated that the only formal unity in the *ghazal* is the external unity provided by its uniform metre and monorhyme.<sup>3</sup> The dictum of Arabo-Persian rhetoric that each verse or distich (*bayt*) must be a self-contained, independent grammatical and syntactic unity with respect to the lines preceding and following it, and therefore must express a complete thought, would seem to deny overall structural or thematic unity to the poem; and many scholars have been led to search for other principles which might provide unifying factors.

One such principle is derived from analogies between poetry and the other arts, which liken a Persian poem to a mosaic, a miniature, or a carpet.<sup>4</sup> A. J. Arberry, discussing Hāfiz's "theory of the lyric", asserts that the *ghazal*'s unity is "thematic" rather than "progressive": Hāfiz's technique consists in choosing two or three conventional "themes" and working out a "pattern" according to which he juxtaposes them; "it is as a mosaic of sounds and symbols that the Hāfizian lyric is to be appreciated; and its artistry, including its unity, is to be understood as being of the order of artistic unity that is found in the finest mosaic pattern."<sup>5</sup> But the distinction between "thematic" and "progressive" unity, which sounds promising, is not expanded upon sufficiently;<sup>6</sup> moreover, Arberry and many others who rely on such analogies do not clearly identify the organizing principle behind this "order of artistic unity" or the nature of the "patterns" involved, nor do they take into sufficient account the important distinctions between verbal and non-verbal art.<sup>7</sup>

Another approach identifies "association of ideas" as the unifying principle of the *ghazal*. Underlying its seemingly disconnected and unrelated verses is a consistent train of thought, "unuttered

but clearly suggested"; once we discover this, states M. Farzād, "we will find that, by the simple process of association of ideas... [Ḥāfiẓ] has linked every verse with the next in every single one of his poems."<sup>8</sup> Again, the basic principle is not defined in such a way as to provide a useful critical criterion;—"association" has been shown to be of various types, governed and directed by a variety of psychological and cultural factors which establish rules and patterns for it:<sup>9</sup> once again we are confronted by the necessity to identify the pattern according to which disparate elements are organized. Thus we cannot ignore the importance of the fundamental organizing factor in the poem: its structure. It is not necessary to "read between the lines", to seek the meaning of a *ghazal* in a series of associations or "suggestions"; Ḥāfiẓ has structured his poems so as to be perfectly comprehensible.

Both approaches mentioned above are based on extra-literary analogies which, while they can illuminate, cannot fully explain specifically literary phenomena. Moreover, although the opinion that Persian poetry lacks unity is weakening,<sup>10</sup> many critics still feel that so great are the essential differences between it and Western poetry that we must read Persian poetry in a totally different way, and be possessed of an entirely different critical apparatus in order to analyze or appreciate it; and theories such as those mentioned are frequently used to support the view that the Persian lyric is fundamentally different from its Western counterparts.<sup>11</sup> This view is in turn reinforced by the almost universal tendency on the part of Western scholars (and, more recently, many Eastern) to evaluate Persian poetry according to critical criteria whose acceptance and vogue date from the Romantics onward, and which emphasize such values as originality, spontaneity, and organic form. Thus J. Rypka states that "a Persian poem should be read in a different manner from that customary to the European, less as a whole, more as filigree work, for it is full of finely-wrought details, with no strictly logical sequence of verses in any given poem as is common in the West,"<sup>12</sup> and further: "The real difference between Persian and occidental poetry lies...in the spontaneity of the West and its contrary in the Orient. ...The importance of the expression of emotion...occupies a place far behind that accorded to it by the West."<sup>13</sup> In such cases it is the generalizations about Western literature which are open to question.<sup>14</sup>

Much of that which in Persian poetry appears strange to the Western reader is the result of unfamiliar images, metaphors and allusions which reflect specific cultural conditions. Problems such as differences in the function and use of metaphor, the poet's relation to nature, spontaneity and sincerity, also primarily reflect cultural, and not fundamental literary, differences.<sup>16</sup> A thorough study of such problems would undoubtedly reveal many similarities between Persian and Western lyric poetry, in the areas both of aesthetics and of poetic practice, which in general have yet to be fully discussed.<sup>16</sup> But here we are chiefly concerned with the question of poetic unity in relation to structure; and in this area, insistence on seemingly opposing principles, such as the unity of the individual verse and the organic unity of the poem, treated as mutually exclusive possibilities, obscures a full comprehension of the structural principles at work in lyric poetry in general, since such 'official' criteria reflect cultural differences expressed in the dominant aesthetic of particular periods. The principle of unity of the verse is not incompatible with that of 'organic' unity; but it can be argued that the latter concept, because of its vagueness and subjectivity, is irrelevant.<sup>17</sup> Any artistic work requires unity; as T. Munro notes, "It would be hard if not impossible to find a work of art which did not possess some unity"; but he also observes, "There are many kinds of unity in art; many ways of organizing its materials."<sup>18</sup> If we may return briefly to the analogy with art: any mosaic, miniature, or other work is unified in the sense that each of its constituent elements has its proper place in the overall design, which determines and controls their organization.

In the light of these remarks, let us consider aspects of structure which contribute to unity in a poem. In general, we can distinguish three broad levels of structural importance. First is the level of the syntactic relationship of the lines (which bears directly upon the question of "unity of the verse"); whether they are syntactically dependent upon one another, or are independent units. The second level of organization may be said to be the poem's abstract generic or formal structure. This is a variable factor; this structure may be loose and individualized (or even absent), or it may be highly conventionalized, as in the case of 'fixed forms' or well-established genres, such as the sonnet and *ghazal*, which provide built-in 'clues' leading to specific expectations, or eliciting specific responses, on the part of the reader.



It is obvious that an important factor in the poem's impact will be the extent to which the poet fulfills or thwarts such expectations, elicits the conventional response or one which is not so conventional. This leads to the next level of organization: within the overall dimensions of generalized structures, with their genre- or form-specific requirements (such as restrictions on number of verses, metrical and rhyme schemes, or particular conventions which must be observed), other sub-structures are used to provide variety, to 'flesh out' the bare bones of the abstract shape. These sub-structures are not, as a rule, genre- or form-specific, but are employed across the barriers of genre or form for a wide variety of purposes.

We can see these various levels of structural organization at work when we look at the following *ghazal* of Ḥāfiẓ.

- 1 ḥāl-i dīl bā tu guftanam havas ast  
khabar-i dīl shīnuftanam havas ast
- 2 Shab-i Qadrī chunīn 'azīz u sharīf  
bā tu tā rūz khuftanam havas ast
- 3 az barāyi sharaf, bah nūk-i muzhah  
khāk-i rāh-i tu ruftanam havas ast
- 4 vah! kih durrdānah-i chunīn nāzuk  
dar shab-i tār suftanam havas ast
- 5 ay Şabā! imshab madadam farmāy  
kih saḥargah, shikuftanam havas ast
- 6 ṭam'-i khām bīn, kih qīṣṣah-i fāsh  
az raqībān niḥuftanam havas ast
- 7 hamchū Ḥāfiẓ, ba-ragham-i mudda 'iyān  
shī'r-i rindānah guftanam havas ast<sup>19</sup>

On the first, syntactic level of structural organization, we see that the fundamental mode of arrangement of Ḥāfiẓ's *ghazal*—as of Persian poetry in general—is paratactic: verses are placed alongside each other, letting the relationship between them be inferred—as

opposed to hypotactic arrangement, where the logical and orderly subordination of clauses, lines or other units within the larger structure of the poem makes the relationship between them, so to speak, self-explanatory. It is hardly surprising to find that parataxis is the *ghazal's* basic mode of organization. As G. W. Turner notes, writing which is close to (or influenced by) the spoken style tends to use the paratactic construction characteristic of that style.<sup>20</sup> We find parataxis used extensively in lyric poetry, which was originally composed to be sung or recited, and at later stages in its development often consciously attempts to maintain or recall its connection with the oral tradition.<sup>21</sup> Although when parataxis is employed the tendency to maintain the integrity of the line is naturally greater<sup>22</sup>—as is the case in the *ghazal*, where rhetoric demands it—there is no reason to assume that a poem so constructed lacks overall structural unity, is randomly or haphazardly arranged, or its elements 'juxtaposed' so as to be interchangeable. In fact, although more attention may be paid to the individual line (which is often polished and refined so as to constitute a "pointe"<sup>23</sup>), the overall structure takes on an additional importance: since the relationship between the lines is not directly and immediately established by the connectives available to the poet composing in the hypotactic mode, or the syllogistic constructions or logical subordinations characteristic of this mode, it must be made clear in some other way. One function of 'fixed forms', and of genres with well-established conventions (such as the *ghazal*), is to provide an overall, unifying structure through which the relationship between the individual verses is made clear.

The next level of our *ghazal's* organization is thus the generic. Because it was so widely assumed that since the verses of the *ghazal* were independent, their order of arrangement was unimportant and could even be varied at will (an impression borne out by the somewhat haphazard methods of copying down poetry which have resulted in innumerable variant readings from manuscript to manuscript), little attention was paid in the past to the question of the overall structure of the *ghazal*.<sup>24</sup> That such a structure does in fact exist is becoming increasingly apparent. It is still often difficult to ascertain the 'correct' position of every verse, and this may be of comparatively lesser importance; but a certain overall pattern may be discerned. In the example under consideration we can see a generic pattern at work.

In the first three lines, Ḥāfiẓ introduces and develops the motif of love made impossible by the beloved's distance ( specially in station), and the impossibility of declaring his love; essentially, these lines provide amplification and further development of the idea of "telling his heart's state" of the first hemistich. In the next three lines, while seeming to develop the original motif still further (through the use of conventional devices such as the appeal to the Zephyr, and the mention of 'rivals' and "a tale exposed", all commonly associated with love poems, in actuality he introduces his real subject, which is poetry itself. The transition comes in line 4, the mid-point of the poem, with the image of "stringing the fine and priceless pearl" (a frequent metaphor for composing poetry) in the dark night, which links the subjects of love and poetry; this line—an ambiguous one, pointing both backwards (to love) and forward (to poetry),—forms a 'turn' from one subject to another resembling the 'turn' of the sonnet.

Such 'turns' are typical of the structure of the *ghazal*. Rypka, commenting on similarities between *ghazal* and sonnet, notes that many Persian poets tend to write *ghazal* of seven distichs with some regularity, and cites this as a point of resemblance with the sonnet.<sup>25</sup> Ḥāfiẓ has many poems of this specific length, which exhibit structural characteristics similar to the example cited here. The balance of such *ghazals* is approximately the same as that of the Petrarchan sonnet, with the 'turn' occurring in the eighth hemistich (as compared to the ninth line of the sonnet).<sup>26</sup> Ḥāfiẓ's use of the image of the pearl at this particular point of his poem may well be taken as an example of his highly conscious artistry (bearing in mind that this is a poem about poetry): the position of the 'turn' recalls that of the central, finest pearl of a necklace, to which a poem is often likened (in this connection, the final line or *takhalluṣ* is often compared to the clasp of a necklace).<sup>27</sup>

Lines 4-6, then, contain a double meaning; they are both a further expansion of the love motif, and an exposition (in indirect terms) of elements connected with the theme of poetry. This double interpretation becomes clear when the poem reaches its climax in the final line, with the specific mention of *shi'r-i rindānah*, 'licentious verse', which illuminates much of significance in the preceding lines which was not immediately apparent. The final line is also characterized by the *takhalluṣ*, another convention specific to the *ghazal*'s generic form, which

as a rule signals the poem's thematic conclusion, or its epigrammatic cap.<sup>28</sup>

Thus the generic structure of the poem become clear: statement of a theme and its exposition with variations, in three lines, followed by a 'turn' at the mid-point of the poem which introduces its second half, related to both the original motif and the main theme, followed by a climactic final line which makes the main theme explicit, and draws a conclusion. That this structure is indeed generic is seen by the frequency of its repetition, not only among Ḥāfiz's *ghazals* but in the works of other poets—albeit with occasional variations: the first line may present the poem's 'stimulus', or state the main theme explicitly; the final line may consist of an epigrammatic cap. These variations are well within the range of those also observed in the Petrarchan sonnet.

But the third level of structural organization in this *ghazal* still remains to be identified. This is the level of the poem's specific organization, the technique it makes use of within the abstract generic framework to provide variety within that overall pattern. The technique used in this *ghazal* is that of the catalogue.

The catalogue is one of the most important and widespread of poetic techniques; it is particularly characteristic of lyric poetry. This is because structurally speaking, the lyric poem can be described as a value system: the poet directs attention, explicitly or implicitly, to one thing (an object, a person, an idea) as a preferred value. One way of expressing such a value is by placing it in a particular position in relation to a list. The short lyric frequently consists, in whole or in part, of a list of one kind or another, which constitutes a basic unifying structure of the poem: the catalogue presents a number of items of interest as background or foil for an item of commanding interest.

Catalogues may be long or short, paratactic or hypotactic in arrangement, linear or discursive in presentation; the list may be condensed into a mere summary. The specific organization of material varies greatly; the preferred value may be expressed at any point (usually at the beginning or end of the list), or may only be implied. But the function of the catalogue is the same in any case: the isolation of value.

In his *ghazal*, Ḥāfiz presents a list of aspirations which he knows

are futile. Outwardly (until the last line, at least) the items that he lists are connected with the theme of love; but as we have noted there is a shift in subject and tone midway through the poem; thus tension is established between the demand of the generic form for such a shift, and the apparent continuity of the catalogue's progress. The first six lines provide background for the "preferred value" presented in the climactic final line: of all the poet's vain desires, the most futile is his wish to compose the kind of poetry he prefers—and for which he is, in fact, famous.<sup>29</sup> The fact that this is the preferred value presented by the poem is established by its position in relation to the catalogue, and reinforced by the use of the *takhalluṣ*. The movement of the catalogue and that of the *ghazal*'s generic structure provide contrasting systems of organization, establishing variety while each constituting a unifying force in the poem; in fact, the poem's unity is achieved not by one structure alone, but by the interaction of the two.

The catalogue structure seen in this *ghazal* is not specific or unique to this particular poem, but may be found repeated in numerous *ghazals*—again, of course, with variations, chief among which are statement of the preferred value in the opening line, and use of a summary catalogue. But catalogues, needless to say, are not limited to particular languages or literatures. Since they are highly flexible structures which lend themselves to numerous and varied uses, may be composed in quite different ways, and yet at the same time contain certain built-in implications, it is not surprising to find that they are widely used in both Western and Eastern literature. The sonnet chosen for comparison with Ḥāfiẓ's *ghazal* also employs the catalogue as its sub-structure; in fact, this sonnet, by Du Bellay, might well be taken as a model for this specific type of catalogue: paratactic in construction, linear in presentation, and based on the accumulation of detail.

Je n'escris point d'amour, n'estant point amoureux,  
 Je n'escris de beauté, n'ayant belle maistresse,  
 Je n'escris de douceur, n'esprouvant que rudesse,  
 Je n'escris de plaisir, me trouvant douloureux:

Je n'escris de bon heur, me trouvant malheureux,  
 Je n'escris de faveur, ne voyant ma Princesse,

Je n'escris de trésors, n'ayant point de richesse,  
Je n'escris de santé, me sentant langoureux :

Je n'escris de la Court, estant loing de mon Prince,  
Je n'escris de la France, en estrange province,  
Je n'escris de l'honneur, n'en voyant point icy :

Je n'escris d'amitié, ne trouvant que feintise,  
Je n'escris de vertue, n'en trouvant point aussi  
Je n'escris de sçavoir, entre les gens d'Eglise.

(*Regrets*, LXXIX)

The unity of this poem, like that of Hāfiz's *ghazal*, is provided by the interaction between the generalized sonnet structure and the specific substructure of the catalogue; it is through this interaction that the meaning of the poem is realized. Although the integrity of each line is as carefully observed in this poem as in any Persian lyric, its organization prohibits any alteration in the arrangement of material, which is dictated by a gradually unfolding pattern. In the first quatrain of the octave the poet lists subjective, personal values ("amour", "plaisir"), as well as conventional subjects for love-sonnets; in the second, he moves to more general values ("bon heur", "santé"), possible subjects for sonnets on moral qualities. In the sestet, he turns to 'public' values ("la Court", "la France", political values; "l'honneur", "vertue", etc., general moral values), and there is an intensification in the sense of place ("loing de mon Prince", "en estrange province") as well as an increased emphasis on negative values which take the place of the positive ones enumerated ("feintise"). There is a corresponding change from a personal relationship to the values of the octave ("n'estant", "me trouvant", "me sentant") to a more objective relationship with those of the sestet ("n'en voyant... icy", "n'en trouvant"); thus the sonnet's 'turn', or genre-specific structural feature, involves a shift in both subject and tone, while the catalogue continues without interruption. The climax of the poem—the presentation of the preferred value, and its rejection (or all the possible subjects which the poet will not, for various reasons, write about, this is the one which, due to specific circumstances, he can write

about least of all)—comes in the final line; its 'preferred' nature is made clear by its position, and attention is called to it by a change in the grammatical structure of the second half of the line: the repeated, parallel negatives of the preceding lines are abruptly replaced by a positive construction.

The syntactic arrangement of the verses of Du Bellay's sonnet is completely paratactic, with the integrity of the line observed throughout. The entire poem is a catalogue, presenting a list of material as foil for a climax in which a preferred value is stated. Du Bellay observes the structural features of the sonnet—the presentation and development of a problem in the octave, its amplification and solution in the sestet, the 'turn' at the ninth line. But he has established a tension between the sonnet's abstract structure and the substructure of the catalogue, which makes only the barest acknowledgement of the expectation of a 'turn'. Thus, rather than move in an obvious way towards his conclusion throughout the sestet, he delays it until the final line, where it is presented against the full weight of the accumulated material of the catalogue.<sup>30</sup>

The similarity between the structure of the two poems is immediately apparent; comparison shows us the same informing principles at work in the French sonnet and the Persian *ghazal*. Each poet is working within a genre which has certain established formal and thematic conventions; within the abstract generic structure of sonnet and *ghazal*, each utilizes the same sub-structure of the linear catalogue which presents a list, constructed paratactically, of things implicitly or explicitly rejected, for reasons which may or may not be stated, as background material or foil for the preferred value presented in the final line.

Thus both poets are doing almost precisely the same thing, in the same way, on essentially the same theme. Du Bellay gives a catalogue of subjects he will not write about, with the reasons for his rejection of them, explicitly stated in the first thirteen lines and implicitly, by juxtaposition, in the final line. Ḥāfiẓ presents a list of aspirations which he knows are futile: aspirations ostensibly related to the motif of love made impossible by the inapproachability of the beloved, but in fact all bearing on his real subject, poetry made impossible by adverse circumstances. Thus the 'turn' in the *ghazal*, as in the sonnet, is from an essentially personal (and more conventional) subject to

a more general one, with a 'public' relevance. At the same time, the circumstances surrounding the rejection of the preferred subject are identified. Du Bellay follows the 'turn' of his sonnet with a line indicating specificity:

Je n'ecris de l'honneur, n'en voyant point *icy*

—calling attention to a specific location (and foreshadowed by more vague allusions in "ne voyant ma Princesse", "loing de mon Prince", "estrange province"), and preparing the way for its identification: "entre les gens d'Eglise". The same function is carried out in Ḥāfiẓ's *ghazal* by another adverb, *imshab*, 'tonight', which refers back to *shab-i tār*, the 'dark night', which may be taken figuratively to suggest inauspicious circumstances, produced by the presence of rivals and pretenders.<sup>31</sup>

In both poems, the final line provides the climax, which is indicated both by position in the relevant structures and by significant verbal changes in the line. But where Du Bellay made his situation clear, although stating it implicitly—his juxtaposition of "wisdom" and "churchmen" leaves no doubt that they are in opposition to each other (a thought which Ḥāfiẓ would no doubt have found highly congenial)—Ḥāfiẓ must be more circumspect: not only does he content himself with a generalized mention of "pretenders" and "rivals", but he makes an implied distinction between the "I" of the poem and the person of Ḥāfiẓ himself ("like Ḥāfiẓ"). Thus he is able both to allude to the kind of poetry for which "Ḥāfiẓ" is famous, and to dissociate himself from it in this poem; he may even be implying that public utterance of such poetry is not merely a foolish desire, but downright dangerous (the true meaning of "flowering" at dawn may be actual survival: if he is to remain alive till the morrow, he must impose strict self-censorship tonight). Thus the 'exposed tale', conventionally associated with the subject of love, in the context of this poem refers even more specifically to that of forbidden poetry. A further link between the themes is provided by the identical rhymes of the first and last hemistichs, *gufṭan*; by this means Ḥāfiẓ joins his ostensible subject with his true one.

The conclusion puts the preceding lines in their proper perspective, and the poem's irony becomes apparent. Ḥāfiẓ shows the impossibility of writing frank, outspoken poetry by writing what, on the



surface, appears to be a conventional, hyperbolic love poem (of the type often combined with panegyric, a characteristic feature of many of Ḥāfiẓ's *ghazals*<sup>32</sup>); the last item in his list, "licentious verse", gives the poem a twist whereby the reader is made aware of the contrast between the poem which Ḥāfiẓ would like to write, and that which he has actually written. Thus the element of surprise resembles that observed in Du Bellay's sonnet; although the irony there was confined mainly to the final line, the very fact that Du Bellay has given us fourteen lines in which he proclaims "I will not write..." while doing exactly that, is itself ironic.

We also note similarities with respect to the use of other techniques: for example, repetition of (and thus emphasis on) the negative element, the idea of unattainability, which in Ḥāfiẓ's *ghazal* is incorporated in the rhyme-word *havas*, while in Du Bellay's sonnet it takes the form of initial parallelism, providing an initial rhyme in addition to the sonnet's end-rhyme, and contrasting with it because remaining constant. Specificity of place, time, and circumstances is made clear first generally by an adverbial element, and later particularized. Analysis of similar thematic elements in the two poems could provide the subject of another, separate study. But the most important aspect of the two, from our point of view, is that they both achieve their unity in the same way: by the inter-action of the generic structure with its specific conventions, and the sub-structure of the catalogue, the dynamic of which contrasts with that of the generic structure to provide tension and variety as well as unity on its own structural level. And at the same time both poems exhibit complete independence between the individual verses on the syntactic level.

The many resemblances at all levels between these two poems are too fundamental and systematic to be regarded as coincidence; nor is there any question of influence, either specific in the case of the poets involved, or general, relating to the area of cultural or literary contacts. Moreover, if we extend our study to other literatures, our chances of finding more poems similar to those cited in this paper are very high. In fact, the specific techniques discussed—in particular those related to the sub-structure of the two poems—are not limited to sonnet, *ghazal*, or any other specific form or genre, but are observed in a wide variety of these. We are left with the conclusion that such techniques form part of a universal 'poetic language', available to all poets.

In this connection we may recall the application to literature of the distinction made by structural linguistics between "langue" and "parole": as S. Skwarczyńska has expressed it, "La langue de la littérature comprend tous les moyens de construire l'énoncé dans toutes ses fonctions possibles, tous les procédés aptes à l'organisation spécifique de cet énoncé, y compris ceux qui servent à son organisation artistique."<sup>33</sup> Thus we can conceive of a literary "langue" composed of certain processes, "ways of saying", which are universal, and which exist in the areas of genre, form and structure, and thematological elements; and of variations (what Skwarczyńska calls "functional equivalents"<sup>34</sup>) specific to individual national literatures, or to related literatures in different languages: the literary "parole". On the structural level, many of these universal processes contribute to the realization of a basic poetic (or artistic) goal: the unity of the work.

Awareness of this distinction, as an important adjunct of the comparative approach, can shed much light on the problems involved in the study of any individual author or specific literary tradition; it can help us to discern which elements may be universal, part of the literary "langue", and which specific, part of the "parole". In the poems compared in this paper, we have seen many shared features, on the levels of genre (the considerable similarities between the abstract, genre-specific structures of *ghazal* and *sonnet*), the structure of the individual poems (use of the catalogue; other techniques on a more specifically verbal level), and thematic elements (the "rejected subjects" motif), representative of the universal literary language; while of course they possess differences, in metrical construction, rhyme, imagery, allusions to cultural and social conditions, and so on, which tie each poem to its respective national tradition. This supports the conviction that it is useless to emphasize those features which make one poet, or one tradition, "essentially different" from another, without paying equal attention to the features which they share; indeed, it is essential first to identify such shared characteristics. The comparative approach, in this case as applied to the study of Hāfiz, can illuminate many hitherto unapprehended aspects of poetry, and help to establish it in its rightful place in relation to world literature, not as some kind of literary "sport", but as an integral portion of that literature.

## Notes

- 1 J. Rypka, *History of Iranian Literature* (Dordrecht, 1968), p. 105.
- 2 See Rypka, p. 95, for a brief comment on similarities between the sonnet and the *ghazal*. Many of these will be discussed in this paper.
- 3 Cf. Rypka, pp. 91, 99-100, and his summary of views on Ḥāfiẓ's *ghazal*, pp. 269-270; also his note on the opinion of A.M. Mirzoyev (pp. 122-123, n. 75) that the independence of the verses of the *ghazal* reaches its peak with Ḥāfiẓ but, that his poems show unity of subject-matter as well as strictly formal (i.e. external) unity. See also the theory of Ḥāfiẓ's "incoherency", discussed by A.J. Arberry, "The Art of Ḥāfiẓ", *Aspects of Islamic Civilization* (London, 1961), pp. 348-349; L. Sūrāgar, *Manẓūmah-hā, i-yi Ghinā, i-yi Irān* (Tehran, 1345/1966), p. 110; M. Farzād, "Mas'alah-i Tavalī-yi Abyāt dar Ash'ār-i Ḥāfiẓ", in *Maqālātī dar būrah-i Zindagī va Shi'r-i Ḥāfiẓ* (Shiraz, 1350/1971), p. 344, and quoted by Arberry, *Classical Persian Literature* (London, 1958), p. 358. Lack of unity is also considered a characteristic of classical Arabic and Turkish poetry.
- 4 In addition to Arberry's "mosaic" theory, see also Sūrāgar, pp. 110-112, who likens the Persian poem to a carpet; and Rypka, pp. 80, 86, and 101, where he observes that "each verse of a Persian poem is in itself a completely worked out and independent miniature". Arberry elsewhere draws an analogy with music and speaks of Ḥāfiẓ's "contrapuntal" technique (*Fifty Poems of Ḥāfiẓ*, Cambridge, 1962, introd., p. 30).  
Such analogies are not, of course, confined to discussions of Eastern literature. For example, Erich Auerbach in *Mimesis* (Princeton, 1953, reprinted 1968), discussing paratactic structures in medieval European literature, uses similar expressions: speaking of the "representational technique" of the *Chanson de Roland* and the *Chanson d'Alexis*, he comments that "it strings independent pictures together like beads" (p. 115), and "it divides the course of events into a mosaic of parcelled pictures" (p. 116). Cf. also note 22 below.
- 5 "The Art of Ḥāfiẓ", p. 350.
- 6 Many elements which Arberry treats as "themes" are not properly such, but belong to other thematological categories such as motifs, recurrent images, *exempla* or *topoi*. In his discussion of a *ghazal* of Ḥāfiẓ he identifies as "themes": "the fair charmer", the divine beloved reflected in the human; wine and music as the lover's consolation; the poet's appreciation of his own creation ("signature theme"). Similarly he cites such "thematic headings" (taken from Ḥusayn Makkī's anthology *Gulzār-i Adab*, Tehran, 1940, where they are used as headings under which are grouped excerpts from various poets) as "Lailā u Majnūn", "Sham' u parvāna", "Gul u bulbul", "Bīmār-i 'ishq", "Dil-i divāna", "Rūy-i māh" ("The Art of Ḥāfiẓ", pp. 351-352). Moreover, Arberry's comment that "Ḥāfiẓ has a number of different devices for appending his signature" (p. 352), and his reference to the "signature theme", implies that the *takhalluṣ* is a mechanical, external feature of the *ghazal* rather than an important structural element; but the function of the *takhalluṣ*, especially as used by Ḥāfiẓ, is more complex than the simple appending of a signature.
- 7 T. E. Jessop, commenting on the essentially "humanistic" nature of verbal as opposed to spatial or sensory art (e.g. painting), makes a distinction which is relevant here: "a word ceases to be a word and therefore loses the beauty of a word when its signification and significance are not apprehended; a colour is most a colour when apprehended apart from what it may happen to represent, and then most

reveals its own beauty. Between the homogeneous beauty of a colour-pattern and the ideo-sensory beauty of a poem I can find no likeness, for the latter is not a pattern of mere images, still less of visual images, but an organic concretion of every kind of experienceable element. This 'Persian carpet' account of painting may be a poor theory of art, but it is the only just theory of visual beauty." ("The Objectivity of Aesthetic Value", *Introductory Readings in Aesthetics*, ed. John Hospers, New York, 1969, p. 260)

- 8 Quoted by Arberry, *Classical Persian Literature*, p. 358; cf. Rypka, p. 102.
- 9 Cf. A. Koestler, *The Act of Creation* (New York, 1967), pp. 642-648; T. Munro, *Form and Style in the Arts* (Cleveland, 1970), pp. 43-45.
- 10 Rypka, p. 95, comments on this in relation to Ḥāfiẓ; and in his review (pp. 269-271) of various theories concerning Ḥāfiẓ's *ghazal*, he quotes R. Lescot's statement ("Chronologie de l'oeuvre de Ḥāfiẓ", *BEO* (Damas) 10, 1944, 61) as an example of changing opinion: "Pour ne s'attacher qu'au sens logique du texte, la plupart des pièces du Divan apparaissent comme admirablement construites. Tout s'y enchaîne avec une perfection rarement égalée... Tout poème de Ḥāfiẓ comporte un fil directeur qui commande le sens... qu'il convient d'accorder à chacun des vers qui le composent. Lorsqu'on éprouve des difficultés à dégager cette idée maîtresse, c'est presque toujours que l'ordonnance de la pièce a été dérangée par un copiste négligent, ou encore qu'on commet quelque faute d'interprétation."
- 11 Cf. Rypka, p. 103: "It is certainly no small matter for the Westerner to transfer himself into a world so far removed by differences in artistic conception...."
- 12 Rypka, p. 102. It is interesting to compare this with an observation by an authority on Western poetry: Graham Hough (noting the absence of a particular order of stanzas in Shelley's "To a Skylark") comments that this "is not an unusual poetic situation: it is not obligatory for poems to progress in a temporal or logical sequence; they have often a timeless, synoptic point of view.... But ... the absence of internal structure is more felt the longer a poem becomes." (*The Romantic Poets*, New York, 1964, p. 143)
- 13 Rypka, pp. 99-100; cf. also his comment on the different treatment of nature in Persian and Western poetry (p. 80): "...the Persian poets' conception of nature follows a different path from ours. The manner of expressing the relation to nature is...visually decorative, conventional, static, in the lyrics even stereotyped...." Contrast this with the following remark by Maurice Evans on the highly rhetorical nature of Elizabethan English poetry: "To understand and enjoy poetry of this kind, we must rid ourselves of many modern assumptions about spontaneity and sincerity in poetry which would have had little meaning to a man of the Renaissance and, in fact, only sprang up with the Romantic revival." (*English Poetry in the Sixteenth Century*, 2d. ed., London, 1967, reprinted 1969, p. 37)
- 14 It is the lack of perspective involved in applying a set of inappropriate criteria to Persian poetry which is at question here, and not the accuracy, whole or partial, of the descriptive statements concerning that poetry. Rypka's views appear somewhat modified elsewhere, when he cites (p. 102) G. E. von Grunebaum's comment on the similarity between the Arabo-Persian poets and "the Alexandrians, the humanists of the Renaissance and their heirs, the classicists of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries" in their regard for form (cf. von Grunebaum, "The Aesthetic Foundation of Arabic Literature", *Comparative Literature* 4, 1952, 326); and quotes (p. 103) some observations by E. Bethe on

Greek poetry to point a comparison between the "power of form" in Greek and Persian literature.

- 15 For views on the importance of socio-cultural factors in aesthetics, see Walter Abell, "Toward a Unified Field in Aesthetics", *Aesthetics Today*, ed. Morris Philipson, (Cleveland, 1961), pp. 432-465; on the relativity of aesthetic judgments, see Curt J. Ducasse, "The Subjectivity of Aesthetic Value", *Introductory Readings in Aesthetics*, pp. 282-307.
- 16 Cf. note 14 above. We might cite as further possibilities, the similarities between the function of metaphor, the use of imagery and the principle of propriety in Renaissance and in classical Persian literature; or the importance of conventional subjects in Latin and Persian poetry—to name only two areas which invite extensive study.
- 17 Cf. Graham Hough's discussion of organic form as a metaphor, in *An Essay on Criticism* (London, 1966), pp. 157-162, where the problem is put as one of a distinction between neo-classical and Romantic analogies for the process of poetic creation; he observes (p. 158): "How are we to determine whether the form of a work of literature has been externally imposed or is co-natural with its conception? ...there is no evidence that could be brought to show that the forms of *Phèdre* is less organic, or arises less from the nature of the material, than that of *Othello*. It proceeds by a different set of conventions, and that is all." Organic form is a "label" that "does little to describe, delimit, or define anything."
- 18 Munro, p. 87; see also his discussion (p. 98) of ways of increasing the effect of unity: similarity of parts or units, proximity of parts or units, more thorough connection of parts or units, boundedness or detachment from context, conformity to an overall pattern.
- 19 I use here the arrangement given by M. Shāmlū in his edition of Ḥāfiẓ (Tehran, 1354/1975, no. 41); in the editions of Qazvīnī and Ghanī (Tehran, 1320/1941, no. 42) and of M. Farzād (*Ḥāfiẓ: Ṣiḥḥat-i Kalamāt va-Iṣālat-i Ghazalḥā*, I, Shiraz, 1349/1970, no. 54) the order is: 1-6-2-4-5-3-7. The question of the order of verses in Ḥāfiẓ's *ghazals* is a complex one; ultimately, since no objective textual evidence exists to provide authority for one version over another, the critic of Ḥāfiẓ must choose that which seems to him most suitable. A fairly literal translation of the poem is as follows:
  - 1 Oh vain desire! to tell you my heart's state;  
oh vain desire! to hear of your feelings.
  - 2 Oh vain desire! to sleep till dawn beside you,  
on such a noble and precious Night of Power.
  - 3 Oh vain desire! to sweep the dust of your path,  
for honour's sake, with the tips of my lashes.
  - 4 Ah, what a vain desire! to string such a fine  
and priceless pearl, in the dark of night.
  - 5 O Zephyr! give me aid tonight;  
it is my vain desire to flower at dawn.
  - 6 See my callow hope! desiring in vain  
to hide from my rivals a tale exposed.
  - 7 Oh vain desire!—to utter, like Ḥāfiẓ,  
in spite of all pretenders, licentious verse.
- 20 G. W. Turner, *Stylistics* (Harmondsworth, 1973), pp. 71-72; Turner notes the

connection between philosophical writing and the development of hypotactic style in the West.

We should not overemphasize the oral character of the *ghazal* in Ḥāfiẓ's time. Internal evidence (such as the abundance of allusions) suggests that by this time at least, if not earlier, the *ghazal* had become a "literary", written genre (although competent poets of course retained their skill at improvisation), and Ḥāfiẓ himself speaks of "writing" in several poems.

- 21 Or with the language of speech; cf. the extensive use of "ballad" meter and blank verse by the English Romantics.
- 22 But not exclusively characteristic of this mode; cf. the example from Thomson's "Winter" quoted by Paul Fussell, Jr., *Poetic Meter and Poetic Form* (New York, 1965), p. 116, which combines line integrity with hypotactic construction. Fussell describes this technique (p. 117) as "...analytic: the materials are being accumulated, like mosaic, piece by piece."
- 23 For a discussion of the *nuktaḥ* or "pointe" in the Persian lyric, see Rypka, pp. 99-100.
- 24 The question of sequence of verses in Ḥāfiẓ's *ghazal* has lately received considerable attention, and is the basis for new editions of Ḥāfiẓ, by M. Farzād and A. Shāmlū in particular, as well as the subject of much critical debate.
- 25 Rypka, p. 95.
- 26 Interestingly enough, the structure of other *ghazals* resembles more that of the English sonnet, with its characteristic 'epigrammatic' ending; in such cases the final distich (usually incorporating the *takḥalluṣ*) provides a conclusion or 'cap' which is frequently epigrammatic in quality and contrasts with the body of the poem. Thus the *ghazal*, like the sonnet, characteristically consists of two parts of unequal weight (cf. Fussell, pp. 127-128; also F. Jost, "The Sonnet in its European Context", *Introduction to Comparative Literature*, Indianapolis, 1974, pp. 169-170, and "Evaluation esthétique et génologie: l'exemple du sonnet", *Neohelicon* 1-2, 1973, 72-73).
- 27 Cf. Arberry, "The Art of Ḥāfiẓ", p. 352.
- 28 Although some variation is seen in the position of the *takḥalluṣ*, in that it does not uniformly occur in the final line (although by Ḥāfiẓ's time this is generally the case), the fact that it signals the poem's thematic conclusion is a general rule.
- 29 *Shi'r-i rindānah*, "licentious verse", might perhaps be better translated as "free-thinking poetry". A *rind* was one who showed his abhorrence of hypocrisy by flouting convention; *shi'r-i rindānah* glorifies such flouting by speaking openly of love and wine. *Rindī* may be compared to Epicureanism in the West; cf. Rypka, p. 268.
- 30 F. Jost has commented that "such linear structures...are rare in Romance literatures because they do not allow for any stinging antitheses in thought or contrasts in emotion between the octave and the sestet" ("The Sonnet", pp. 169-170; cf. "Evaluation", 72-73). We have noted that a clear shift in subject and tone does, however, occur; the poem is in essence a variation on what Jost describes as the "early" type of sonnet, where "the sestet was a particular application of a more general statement made in the octave" (a situation applicable to many *ghazals*; "The Sonnet", p. 168). Moreover, the catalogue, ending in a sort of 'punch line' where the poet suddenly makes his point after heaping an accumulation of details and possibilities on the reader, is highly effective.

- 31 *Mudda'ī*, "pretender", is customarily used by Ḥāfiẓ to mean someone who pretends to be what he is not: an ignorant critic of poetry, for example, or a hypocritical authority (usually religious) who imposes his own narrow views on others; while *raqīb*, "rival", often means, not only a rival (or obstacle) in love, but a rival in poetry.
- 32 Cf. Rypka, p. 266.
- 33 "L'aspect esthétique dans les recherches de la littérature comparée", *Neohelicon* 1-2 (1973), 60.
- 34 *Ibid.*, p. 61.

Aristotle, *Kāvyaatattva*, Introduction, Translation and Commentary by Sisir Kumar Das (Asha Prakashani, Calcutta, May 1977).

This is, to my knowledge, the first complete translation of Aristotle's *Poetics* into Bengali. The author himself confesses that his knowledge of Greek is rather inadequate to the enterprise: his bold attempt, so he tells us, is meant to disturb the mental peace of Greek scholars in India and to stimulate them to complete and perfect the work initiated by him.

In a very substantial introduction, he gives us useful information about the transmission of Aristotle's text and about Aristotle's career. He then discusses the general plan of the book and a number of concepts which have been the object of long controversies from the time of the Renaissance. The broad survey of Greek tragedy given as the background of Aristotle's doctrine (Introduction, pp. xvii-xix) is slightly oversimplified.

The central question raised by both the Introduction and the translation is that of Aristotle's intention. Was he primarily a literary critic or a teacher of literary technique? Sri Das justly notes that Aristotle has not tried to analyse the mysterious working of poetic inspiration. The poet, for him, is first of all a builder, a maker. Unfortunately, Sri Das abandons this line of thought and makes of Aristotle a critic (Introduction, p. xxxi). This gives a definite slant to his translation. The very title of the book "*Kāvyaatattva*" betrays the translator's approach. The Greek *Poietikē* does not mean *Kāvyaatattva* but *Kāvya-kalā*. Aristotle's treatise is first and foremost a guide for would-be poets. That it can also be used as a criterion for literary judgment is undeniable, but its primary purpose is to teach the technique of literary composition.

To give an idea of the importance of the translator's acceptance or rejection of this fundamental position, let us put side by side Sri Das's translation of the first two paragraphs and our proposed translation of the same portion:



## কাব্যতত্ত্ব

কাব্যের স্বরূপ ও তার শ্রেণীবিভাগ,  
প্রত্যেকটি শ্রেণীর বৈশিষ্ট্য,  
কীভাবে একটি রচনার গ্রন্থন হলে  
কাব্যের সার্থকতা,  
(বিভিন্ন শ্রেণীর মধ্যে কতটা পার্থক্য,  
পার্থক্যের প্রকৃতি কি)  
এবং কাব্যের বিভিন্ন অঙ্গ ও অঙ্গের প্রকৃতি  
ইত্যাদি বিষয় আমি আলোচনা করব।  
স্বাভাবিক নিয়ম অনুসারেই প্রথম বিষয়টি  
প্রথমে আলোচনা করা যাক।

## কাব্যকলা

কাব্যকলার জাতি এবং শাখা বিষয়ে,  
শাখাগুলির কী কী সম্ভাবনা আছে,  
রচনা সার্থক ক'রে তুলতে হ'লে  
কাহিনী কীভাবে গড়তে হবে,  
কাব্যকলার বিভাগ কতগুলি এবং তারা  
কী ধরনের,  
এবং এই শাস্ত্রের সঙ্গে সম্পৃক্ত, অন্য যা কিছু  
সেই সকল বিষয়েই আমরা আলোচনা  
করবো —  
স্বভাবতই মূলতত্ত্বগুলি থেকে আরম্ভ ক'রে।

A few remarks regarding this first paragraph:

1. Literally, the first line means: "Regarding both the poetic art itself and its forms." Butcher's rendering "poetry *in* itself" has misled the Bengali translator who goes one step further and says "kavyer svarup", thus making of the *Poetics* an investigation into the nature of poetry.
2. In the second line, the Greek *dunamis* has been wrongly translated as *vaisitya*.
3. In lines 3 and 4, the Greek construction has been so changed as to misrepresent Aristotle's meaning.
4. Lines 5 and 6 which we have put between brackets are not in the original.

The second paragraph maintains the same ambiguity. The Bengali translation takes epic, tragedy, comedy and dithyramb as finished compositions and makes Aristotle say that such finished compositions are imitations. But Aristotle says explicitly that he is concerned with the *making* (*poiēsis*) of epic, tragedy, etc, and that *poiēsis*, i.e. the process of composition is a kind of *mimēsis*, i.e. a process of imitating. Art, for Aristotle, is a technique of imitation. He does not say that a portrait is the imitation of a person, but that the painter, while making a portrait, is imitating the model, or that the poet, while composing a tragedy, is imitating an action. He speaks of *anukarana* and not

of *anukṛti*. To be logical with himself, the Bengali translator should have used the word *anukṛti*.

We may now put side by side Sri Das's translation (a) and our proposed emendation (b):

(a)	(b)
মহাকাব্য, ট্রাজেডি, কমেডি এবং দিখুরাম্ব-কাব্য, বাঁশি বাজানো, কিথারা বাজানো—এই সব কিছুকেই সাধারণভাবে বলা চলে অনুকরণস্বক। এরা (অবশ্য) পরস্পরের থেকে তিন ভাবে পৃথক, হয় তাদের মাধ্যমে, কিংবা বিষয়বস্তুতে কিংবা অনুকরণের রীতিতে।	এপিক ট্রাজেডি কমেডি ও দিখুরাম্বের রচনা এবং অধিকাংশ ক্ষেত্রে বাঁশি ও বীণা বাদন—সাধারণভাবে এগুলি হল অনুকরণ।

In fact, the whole translation reveals a lack of close contact with the original text. One has the impression that the translator has mainly used English translations, resting satisfied with an occasional check on the Greek text. As a result much of Aristotle's subtlety has been lost, and what we have is mostly approximation and over-simplification. Take, for instance, the definition of *anagnōrisis*, in chapter II. (Bengali trans. p. 32-33):

উদ্ঘাটন, শব্দটি থেকেই বোঝা যাচ্ছে, এও একটা পরিবর্তন,  
অজ্ঞানতা থেকে জ্ঞানে, ভালবাসা থেকে ঘৃণায়, সৌভাগ্য থেকে দুর্ভাগ্যে।

Now, this is not Aristotle at all. *Anagnōrisis* is, no doubt, a change from ignorance to awareness, but, in no way, a change from love to hatred or a change from happiness to misfortune. If we analyse the original text which is very succinct, we obtain the following:

1. Definition of *anagnōrisis*: "a change from ignorance to awareness."
2. It may work in two different ways:
  - (a) for those whose dramatic situation leads them to happiness, *anagnōrisis* will consist in recognizing a bond of love or kinship where they had seen hostility;
  - (b) for those whose dramatic situation leads them to misfortune, *anagnōrisis* will consist in recognizing hostility where they had seen love and kinship.

*Anagnōrīsis*, therefore, is *not* a change from love to hatred, but the recognition of either kinship or hostility where they were not suspected. The first type of recognition is best illustrated in the *Iphigenia in Tauris*, the second type, in the *Oedipus Rex*.

Thus the construction of the Greek text is as follows:

“*Anagnōrīsis* is a change (*metabolē*) from ignorance to awareness

(a) *eis philian*: awareness of kinship

*tōn pros eutukhian hōrismenōn*: for those oriented towards happiness;

(b) *eis ekhthran*: awareness of hostility

*tōn pros dustukhian hōrismenōn*: for those oriented towards disaster.

Bywater's translation is: “A Discovery is, as the very word implies, a change from ignorance to knowledge, and thus to either love or hate, in the personages marked for good or evil fortune.”

Golden is a little more explicit: “Recognition, as the name indicates, is a change from ignorance to knowledge, bringing about either a state of friendship or one of hostility on the part of those who have been marked out for good fortune or bad.”

Both of them, however, have chosen to ignore the obvious connection between “dis gnōsin” and the two specifications which follow immediately “ē eis philian ē eis ekhthran”, repeating the preposition “eis”. There is no indication of a consequence or a result flowing out of *anagnōrīsis*, but just a double qualification of “gnōsin”. This is, therefore, the Bengali translation which we propose:

প্রত্যভিজ্ঞা, শব্দটি থেকেই বোঝা যাচ্ছে, অজ্ঞানতা থেকে জ্ঞানে পরিবর্তন—  
‘খাদ্যীয়তার জ্ঞান তাদের যারা সুখের পথে, বৈরিতার জ্ঞান তাদের যারা দুঃখের  
পথে।

The lists of Greek words and names given in *Appendix 3* and *4* should be carefully revised. Usually in such lists the nominative singular is used, as in any glossary. Here are a few obvious mistakes: *skhēmaton* (gen. plur.) for *skhēma*; *pathē* (nom. plur.) for *pathos*; *epeisodia* (nom. plur.) for *epeisodion*; *tekhnēn* (acc. sing.) for *tekhnē*; *diaresei* (dat. sing.) for *diarexis*; *Anthei* (dat. sing.) for *Anthos*; *Kuklōpas* (acc. plur.) for *Kuklōps*; *Khoēphoroi* (dat. plur.) for *Khoēphoroi*.

Regarding the transliteration of Greek words into Bengali I think that the distinction between o-mikron and ō-mega should be kept. Apollōn=আপোল্লোন্ ; Sophoklēs=সফক্লেস্ ; Sōkratēs=সোক্রেতিস্ ।

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Ananta Charana Sukla, *The Concept of Imitation in Greek and Indian Aesthetics*, (Rupa & Co., Calcutta, 1977) iii+308+xi.

This comprehensive study establishing a parallel between the Greek and the Indian concept of imitation is projected against the broader background of the environment, temperament and world outlook of both cultures, these three basic elements being shown in a causal sequence, the environment contributing to shaping the temperament, and the latter conditioning the world outlook.

There is a lurking fallacy in this approach, especially in the case of Indian situation. The author gives the impression that the early Aryans entered India empty-handed and built the Vedic mythology under the awe-inspiring impact of the Indian landscape. Moreover, the difference between environments should not be given undue importance. An ancient Cretan standing at the foot of Mount Ida or on the Northern shore of the island might well have been as awe-struck as an ancient Aryan facing the Himalaya or gazing at the Indian Ocean. This is no important issue at all, for the environment is soon forgotten and we are invited to undertake an arduous journey through the long evolution of the concept of imitation both in ancient Greece and in ancient India.

The key-note of the comparison is the contrast between two mentalities: the Greek outlook is naturalistic, earth-bound, man-centred; the Indian outlook is mystical, mostly acosmic and contemplative. From the naturalistic art forms of Minoan and Mycenaean cultures, we pass through Homer and Hesiod to reach the pre-classical and the classical period, when the artist's ideal is to imitate Nature's supreme craftsmanship. Yet, in practice, the artist is no passive imitator: his task implies selection, idealisation and symbolization. Early Greek philosophy is an attempt at reaching an invisible transcendent hidden by the anthropomorphic vision of the ancient epic. The microcosm is seen as a reflection of the macrocosm. Visual art becomes an attempt at suggesting the invisible. Socrates' pragmatism fails to give art its

rightful place. With Plato we enter metaphysics proper: the visible word is only a poor imitation of the invisible reality and art becomes the imitation of an imitation. His quest for the ultimate truth makes him despise art as 'a poor child born of poor parents'. By bringing down the Platonic forms from their ethereal isolation into the very stuff of the universe, Aristotle restores the dignity of art. Imitation being an innate instinct in man, art is one manifestation of that instinct. It is the form which art tries to recapture beyond the contingent fluctuations of matter.

The Indian itinerary is more complex than the Greek. Vague intimations can be gleaned from Vedic literature concerning the meaning of the words *śilpa* and *kalā*. *Rūpa*, as the object of the visual organ, is studied in the context of the Vedic altar. *Citra*, standing for both sculpture and painting, is much more than a copy of the original, for the reality of an object is its innermost vital spirit which, in the artistic rendering, must be perceived through and beyond the visible manifestation. The elaborate explanation of the six principles governing the production of *citra* cannot be adequately summarized here. We pass now to music, dance and drama, the latter being the most imitative of all arts.

Finally, in his conclusion the author intends to show that "the comparative study of two otherwise unconnected and independent theories . . . is rewarding in that it clarifies some of the obscurities in either and supplements some of the partial understandings of each by bringing corrective light from the other". Compared with the profuse development of the two traditions, the conclusion is rather jejune. The encyclopedic character of the information gathered by the patient research of the author makes the reading of his book laborious. He himself was conscious of the risk he was taking: in his Preface, he tells us that the long developments which he thought necessary to indulge in "may, at times, appear long-winded or as a rehash; but we believe in their relevance". I would, to a certain extent, question his last point. The fare he offers us is so rich that it makes us drowsy: the abundance of details and view-points makes us lose the thread of his argument. A little pruning would be welcome. Did not Voléry say, "Opulence paralyse"?

—Robert Antoine, S.J.

## OUR CONTRIBUTORS

A Belgian by birth and an Indian by choice *Robert Antoine, S. J.* is a senior teacher of the Department of Comparative Literature at Jadavpur. With a considerable knowledge in Sanskrit literature he is now engaged in a structural analysis of the *Rāmāyaṇa*. \* *T. G. Mainkar* is the Bhandarkar Professor of Sanskrit at Bombay University. \* *M. Macmillan* is the Asstt. Education Advisor I of the British Council Division of New Delhi's British High Commission. Both the articles by Professor Mainkar and Mr. Macmillan were first read at a three-day seminar on Comparative Literature (1976) organized by the Extension Service of the University of Delhi. The proceedings have come out in book form (*Comparative Literature*, Delhi University, n.d.). The Director of the seminar, Professor Nagendra, has kindly allowed us to print these articles in *JJCL*. \* For India's Sahitya Akademi (academy of literature) *Amiya Dev*, another senior teacher of the department, is currently writing a monograph (in English) on the Bengali poet Sudhindranath Datta. This will be followed by a full-length biography in Bengali for the Hiren-dranath Datta Foundation of Jadavpur. His article here was at first read at another Delhi seminar on Comparative Literature organized by Gyan Devi Salwan College in April 1977. \* *K. M. George* of Kerala writes in Malayalam and English, and is the former Chief-Editor of the *Encyclopaedia of Indian Literature*. His publications include *Western Influence on Malayalam Language and Literature* and *Kumaran Asan*, both published by the Sahitya Akademi. \* *Sukumar Sen* is the former Khaira Professor of Comparative Philology of Calcutta University and has written the most exhaustive history of Bengali literature, *Banga Sahityer Itihas*, in four volumes. He is an institution by himself. India's Sahitya Akademi has nominated him as a Fellow. In his article in Bengali he has explained his approach to the problem of writing a history of literature. \* *Sujit Mukherjee* was a visiting professor at the University of Wisconsin in 1975. Now on leave from a publishing firm at New Delhi, he is working on the problems of writing a comprehensive history of Indian Literature. A monograph on this subject, *Towards*

*a Literary History of India*, was published in 1975 by the Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Simla, India. *Mahā-bhārater Kathā*, of which the first four chapters have been translated here by Shri Mukherjee is an important study in Bengali on the Indian epic. We expect to print subsequent chapters also in translation. *Julie Scott Meisami* from the U.S.A. teaches English and Comparative Literature at the University of Teheran.

#### EDITOR'S APOLOGY

Volume 14 of this journal should have been published before March 1977, and by this time another volume was due. We have failed to keep the schedule owing to odd circumstances. An academic journal like *JJCL* is not a financially viable proposition. We have to be at the receiving end, and have to swallow necessary indignities. In one full year only half of the pages could get printed! With a sense of desperation, we now offer this as a joint volume (14 & 15). We hope to do better with our next volume which is volume 16, scheduled to be published before March 1979. Meanwhile we tender our sincere apologies to the contributors and readers of this journal.